

EDMUND BURKE

Selections

With Essays by

HAZLITT ARNOLD

& OTHERS

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With an Introduction and Notes by

A. M. D. HUGHES

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OXFORD  
AT THE CLARENDON PRESS



OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS  
AMEN HOUSE, E.C. 4  
London Edinburgh Glasgow New York  
Toronto Melbourne Cape Town Bombay  
Calcutta Madras

GEOFFREY CUMBERLEGE  
PUBLISHER TO THE UNIVERSITY

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FIRST EDITION, 1921  
REPRINTED 1922, 1924  
1928, 1930, 1947



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PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN

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## INTRODUCTION

IN July 1765 Burke became Private Secretary to Lord Rockingham at the outset of his first administration, and soon afterwards entered Parliament. He was thirty-six years old, and known, if at all, in the seats of power as only an Irish adventurer and a literary man, with his deep studies in history and economics lying by him like an uninvested fund. He rose almost at once to his extraordinary position as the familiar genius of the Rockingham Whigs. Many critics have lamented, like Goldsmith, that in choosing this career he missed his calling and enthralled his powers. But in his own eyes politics were a part of morals, where wisdom comes only with use, and party was the strait gate to the service of mankind.

In 1765 George III had already awakened the deep unrest, that abated only when it made a democracy. For close on fifty years the new dynasty had taken its policy from the Whigs, and yielded to the latent purpose of the Revolution that the king, in governing, should comply with his Ministers, and they with Parliament. The party of Walpole and Newcastle had conned the State through a dangerous sea ; but in course of time the factiousness and the gross jobbery of their rule alienated the best among themselves, and united the Tories with large numbers of men who desired simply a pure and active government. As early as 1738 the scheming Bolingbroke had projected a new Toryism in his *Idea of a Patriot King*, which, on its publication in 1749, he dedicated to Frederick Prince of Wales, whose eldest son, the future George III, was dieted daily with its precepts. In this roseate forecast the Patriot King, when he comes, will look to the pattern of Queen Elizabeth, and the Peers and Commons who served her with one mind, and set his face against government by a party, ' which must always end in the government of a *faction* . . . and in the oppression of the people.' ' The true image of a free people governed by a PATRIOT KING is that of a patriarchal family. . . . Instead of abetting the divisions of his people, he will endeavour to unite them,

and to be himself the centre of their union.' And this he will do without infringing the Constitution or the liberties of the subject. His 'limitations' will not be 'even felt as shackles by a good prince'; who will be rather inclined to increase liberty, and, by shorter Parliaments and a wider franchise, to gauge the mind of his People better and oftener. The Tory of 1760, in fact, was (by profession) the progressive, and the Whig, with his vested interest in the old suffrage, the obstructor. The specious and heroic 'patriotism' of Bolingbroke appealed equally to the average man and the bolder spirits who fretted for better things. It appealed to the elder Pitt, as afterwards to Disraeli. Of the various sections into which the Whigs of the sixties were dispersed, the 'Bedfords' and 'Grenvilles' were divided originally by personal motives from each other and from the main body under Rockingham; but the separation of Rockingham and Pitt was largely due to the ambition of the Great Commoner to cleanse and quicken government by a union of the parties and by some measure of electoral reform.

The reader will find in the extracts from the *Present Discontents* some account of George's procedure when he came to the throne. He should turn to Macaulay on Chatham and to Sir George Trevelyan's *Early Life of Charles James Fox* and his volumes on the American War for the full story of how the king disintegrated and routed his 'enemies' who would not have him the master of his kingdom; how he formed his own party of King's Friends and became its manager; how by all his means of punishment and reward he bought and bullied his Parliament; how he suffered his Whig Ministries up to the first opportunity of dismissing them; how in 1770 he dominated the Cabinet, and for twelve tragical years 'governed as well as reigned'; and how the war ended with his Pyrrhic victory of 1783, when the younger Pitt came in as the nation's servant and not primarily as his. No narrower mind or more dogged will has ever moulded our affairs.

'For my part,' said Lord Chatham, in 1770, when conscious of his own mistakes, 'I am grown old, and unable to fill any office of business; but this I am resolved on, that I will not even sit at Council but to meet Lord Rockingham. He, and he alone, has a knot of spotless

friends, such as ought to govern this kingdom.' Soon after the king's accession the corrupt following of Newcastle was converted by the purgation of defeat into a body of young men, who, in the words of a noble passage in this book (p. 161), 'would have adorned the most splendid period in your history ;—the Saviles, the Dowdeswells, the Wentworths, the Bentincks ; the Lennoxes, the Manchesters, the Keppels, the Saunderses ; the temperate, permanent, hereditary virtue of the whole house of Cavendish'. Such was Burke's party, which, but for two intervals of a few months each, was permanently in opposition. History has somewhat against it both in conduct and vision, but it far exceeded the ordinary measure of political probity. When the innocence of the new Toryism vanished at proof like a mirage, and the king's government embroiled both the country and its Colonies by assailing the first articles of their freedom, when the war in America stupefied men's consciences and inflamed their tempers, Rockingham and his friends might have washed their hands of it all and retired to their libraries and field sports. But duty constrained them to do battle for the nobler England through long years of discouragement and reproach. It was Burke's office to nurse their faith, to prompt their policy, and hold up a view of their creed that steeped it in humanity and touched it to finer issues in imagination and in thought. More than this, he acted continually as a free lance in the service of unpopular causes, going aside, alone or with few others, to the remedy of inveterate abuses and obscure wrongs. Some of his aspirations were too forward for the time—the freedom of trade, the remodelling of the criminal law, the abolition of slavery. Some he brought to pass by his own or other hands. He was the first of the financial reformers. The relief of the Roman Catholics in 1778, and the similar measure in Ireland in the same year, were both of his mooted. In 1780, in answer to his appeals and to Irish menaces, the laws that strangled Irish trade were rescinded. But the work in which he gloried most was the intense labour that brought home to himself and his countrymen the enormous crimes of the Company's servants in India, from 1772, when he led an inquiry into Indian affairs, to 1786, when he forced the trial of Hastings on both parties. To Matthew Arnold the charm in Burke was

the intellectual atmosphere and the ideas; but a deep human-heartedness was 'the master-light of his seeing' and the spur to his labours. There were times in the House of Commons when the man of the 'heavy Quaker-like figure, with the scratch wig, the round spectacles, and the cumbrous roll of paper loading his pocket', who so often would empty the benches with the 'winding of his never-ending horn' (p. 37), could sway his audience with anger or pity. The never-published speech of 1778 on the excesses of the Indians in Burgoyne's army 'drew tears from the whole House', and the printed page supports Miss Burney's description of the blast of his indignation in the indictment of Hastings. These simpler motives mingled with others of a rarer kind: a devout pleasure in the graces and dignities of human nature, a deep sense of the goodness of order, and 'pious awe and trembling solicitude' for all great monuments of human thought and love, whether in politics or in faith.

The course of his political speculation turns sharply upon itself at the outbreak of the French Revolution, so that some of his critics have denied its continuity, and would prefer a metaphor like that used by Moore on p. 21—of 'a vast continent severed by some convulsion in nature'. The student of Burke must try this issue, and must set on one side the speeches and writings on the distemper of the Constitution, on America and India, and the minor matters of the first period, and on the other side the speeches and writings on France. In point of sentiment the difference in the later mood is plain, and is confessed by Burke himself in the beautiful analogy of Priam thinking only of Hector's body and driving his living children away (p. 167),—not that he loved freedom less, but his heart was bleeding for kingship and rank. But is there a difference between the earlier Burke and the later in principle, or as Coleridge puts it, 'a versatility of the principle with this occasion'? Is there, in fact, as Macaulay will have it, in the first place no principle at all, but sentiment and imagination first, and reason subsidiary? A few notes may be put down towards an answer.

In the first period he has always before him the all-adventuring energy, the happiness and the freedom of the Colonies; or the ancient spirit of the people at home,

breathed and exercised through its liberal constitution and the historical parties. In America the tyrant had come with a legal right of taxing, which traversed the habit of self-government and the dearest tradition of British freedom. It was good in law, but fatal in policy. It was forgetting that in America there were men to deal with, and Englishmen. At home the same tyrant, and the theorists who helped him, would lay hands on the vital system of the State, purify it of party, and reduce it to a unison of good wills in chime with his own ; forgetting again that a governor is the servant of his subjects, and that man in Britain is neither an angel nor a slave. Burke's argument in either case is the folly of overriding with mere legality or a mere ideal the prejudices of a people, the customs on which its heart is set, its habits of action, and the institutions that give them play. In all this he is moving into possession of a new and profound idea of the State, as a living and organic whole, with its own way of growing and being, and its roots struck deep in the past. The only law it will take must be natural to it, a fulfilment of its own tendencies, and a gradual fulfilment. If it is restless, if the people are dissatisfied, the ruler should suppose that he is in fault, and has tried to train it the wrong way. 'In all disputes between the people and their rulers the presumption is at least upon a par in favour of the people' (p. 47). 'The people are the masters. They have only to express their wants at large and in gross. We [Parliament] are the skilful artificers to shape their desires into form.'<sup>1</sup> The tyrant and the theorist are alike in this, that they borrow of each other and grudge her kindly freedom to Nature. And the fault in each has a moral side to it. It is always some degree of the 'little mind' that 'goes ill with a great Empire', some failure of the imagination or the heart.

The speeches on India intensify a strain of sentiment in Burke that is always present more or less. The argument here is the sanctity of a people's life. Burke bids us before all things to 'love the little platoon' of our destiny ; but his charity and piety, spreading from their centre at home, took in 'the mysterious incorporation of the race' in all its communities, and saw in them all the unfolding of

<sup>1</sup> From a speech of 1780.

a Divine Will. India, with its ancient nations and creeds, and a culture in some ways higher than ours, touched that chord with a special power. He never thought we ought to withdraw from it. ‘There we are ; there we are placed by the Sovereign Disposer, and we must do the best we can in our situation. The situation of man is the preceptor of his duty.’ But the doings of the Company or its servants stirred his sense of sacrilege in all its depths, and discovered the prophet within the statesman.

So far Burke has dealt with constitutional or habitual liberty, for which his love was pure and passionate. But if we examine him on the statement that ‘the people are the masters’, and ask whether it means that the wishes of the majority are to prevail, the answer is sometimes indistinct, but as a rule definitely No. An inconsistency in terms, as well as in temper, between his earlier and later views can only be established if we insist on a few democratic pronouncements strewn here and there in the earlier writings. The People, he tells us, are the whole body politic, and not any one of its parts (pp. 144 f.) ; but he often uses the word of the majority or the masses, and it is to them that he seems at times to commit the sovereignty. But that is not his habitual mind. There are institutions so fast in the social frame that it appears impossible to change them without endangering it. When these are assailed, he calls in the People in the composite sense, and stipulates for the consent of the ‘natural aristocracy’ (p. 145) with the masses ; in which consent alone the permanent instinct of the society can speak—the instinct that has moved in the dead generations, as in the living, and is always wise (p. 61). It follows that no revolution is right which the natural aristocracy do not approve, as it did approve, and execute, the glorious transaction of 1688. Among the institutions thus safeguarded was the franchise under which Old Sarum returned its two members to Parliament, and Manchester, Sheffield, and Birmingham not one ; and the question of Parliamentary Reform is the test of his theory. The remedies that he devised instead of it (pp. 53 f.) are proposed with an evident mistrust and almost in despair. Nor can he have put much faith in the argument (p. 75), that as those who enjoyed the vote naturally participated in the thoughts and feelings of those

who did not, we had already 'virtually', if not actually, a universal suffrage. The real motive of his injunction against a reform of Parliament was a certain fear of humanity. His fear of man rude and common runs clean counter to his love for him when tempered by discipline and ennobled by power. For this reason he rejoices in liberty when established, and is eager to advance it, wherever practicable, to the golden measure of the English Revolution; but there the wheels of change are stopped, or move only by meticulous degrees.

The effect upon him of the French Revolution, therefore, is nothing strange, or is strange only because it carried the two principles of fear and love to extremes. The Revolution came in the strength of 'natural rights'. The franchise, for instance, is a right, as belonging to the outfit of personality. If a right, it cannot be unpractical, for a right, until it is won, is an irremissible hope, and rules the present from the future. Burke allows that there are such rights (pp. 140 f.); but he abominates them as a policy through slighting them as a hope. He puts them in the limbo of 'metaphysical' things, and does not see the difference between the attempt to apply them—the aspirations, as they were, of millions of men—and the attempt of George III to foist his legal fiction on America. His imagination is not indeed the master of his reason, as Macaulay says, but it is a great ally. When the Revolution came, he could no longer argue, in the extremity of his panic, for the strong presumption in favour of any movement by whole classes and great multitudes; he could not even credit the multitudes with a normal humanity. Arnold has highly extolled the passage (pp. 159, 160), where for once he suspends his curses, lest he should fight against God. But it was only an interval in the spell of hate. Miss Burney noticed that talking of the Revolution gave his face 'the expression of a man who is going to defend himself from murderers'.

To all minds, therefore, in the school of Shelley or Mazzini he is one of those who did not 'ask the way to Zion with their faces thitherward'. But he remains to them a venerable figure. Hazlitt, Radical as he was, has insisted with characteristic fairness on the immense value of his doctrine, so far as it will go. He is the classic witness

of Conservatism, to the power of which his conception of the organic state, though infirmly held and sometimes lost (pp. 150, 151), became in time an immeasurable aid. It is not only by that conception that he has one foot, as it were, in the next century, but also by spiritual sensibility. To the men of his own time the staple of all human history was the failure of hope and the frailty of will, and no one who belonged to it could have known the serene faith in man which sustained Wordsworth when he too fell foul of the Revolution. And if Burke had attained it, the force of that event to an imagination peculiarly susceptible of power and terror<sup>1</sup> would have taxed it hard. But as the light intensifies the shade, Burke's fear and hate are the other side of a great devotion. He saw the new philosophy making war on the ethics as well as on the governments of Europe, and felt that the life of the spirit was at stake. He thought he defended much more than this institution or that. Lockhart tells how Scott, after a speech at a meeting in defence of some legal usages then threatened with reform, was twitted by Jeffrey and others on his earnest eloquence. 'No, no,' he exclaimed, "'tis no laughing matter. Little by little, whatever your wishes may be, you will destroy and undermine till nothing that makes Scotland Scotland will remain'; and burst into tears. Burke, too, stood sentinel at the outposts of the old faith and polity, and trembled in the same way for 'the works of God established in order and beauty' (p. 78).

<sup>1</sup> Not a pictorial imagination, as Macaulay says it is. In the description of the Mahratta Cavalry in the Carnatic (pp. 117 f.) not one image is visually distinct.

## DATES

1729 (? end of 1728). Edmund Burke born in Dublin of Irish parents; his father, a solicitor of good standing and a Protestant; his mother (maiden name Nagle), a Roman Catholic. With his two brothers he is brought up in the father's creed; his only sister in the mother's.

1741-3. Attends school of Abraham Shackleton, a Quaker from Yorkshire, at Ballitore, 30 miles from Dublin.

1743-8. At Trinity College, Dublin; years spent in desultory and excursive reading; and barren of academic distinction.

1750. Migrates to London, and lives at first in the Middle Temple as a student of law. Presently abandons his study for literature. Period of obscurity and poverty follows.

1756. Marries Jane Mary Nugent, an Irishwoman, and, until her marriage, a Roman Catholic. (Their eldest son, Richard, born 1758; a second son died in infancy.) Publishes *A Vindication of Natural Society* (see p. 179), and *An Inquiry into the Origin of our Ideas on the Sublime and Beautiful*.

1758. Undertakes the production of the *Annual Register*, for which he continued to write until about 1788.

1759. Makes acquaintance of William Gerard Hamilton, 'Single-speech Hamilton', a prominent politician, and becomes his private assistant.

1761-4. In Ireland as private secretary to Hamilton, now Chief Secretary to the Earl of Halifax, Lord Lieutenant.

1764. Burke leaves Ireland with Hamilton, who had lost his office. Becomes a member, with Johnson, Reynolds, Goldsmith, and others, of the 'Literary Club'.

1765. Parliament passes the Stamp Act for America. Burke breaks with Hamilton, who refused him a margin of time for literary work (April). Becomes private secretary to the Marquis of Rockingham on the formation of his first Ministry, after the fall of George Grenville (July). Enters Parliament as member for Wendover (December).

1766. Temporary settlement of the American question by Rockingham's Ministry through (a) a Declaratory Act, affirming authority of Britain over the Colonies in legislation and taxation, and (b) the repeal of the Stamp Act. Rockingham dismissed (June 7). A coalition government is now

formed by Pitt under the Duke of Grafton as nominal chief. Burke is offered a place in the new Ministry, but decides to follow his friends.

1767. Chatham disabled by illness (February). Act for taxing American imports passed by Charles Townshend, Chancellor of the Exchequer (May). Burke the driving influence in his party.

1768. Chatham leaves the Ministry (October). Burke purchases the estate of Gregories at Beaconsfield for a considerable sum.

1768-9. Struggle of the House of Commons with the constituency of Middlesex over the election of Wilkes.

1769. *Observations on a late Publication on the Present State of the Nation.*

1770. All the American import duties, except that on tea, are removed (March). *Thoughts on the Cause of the Present Discontents* published in April. New Ministry under Lord North.

1771. Contends for freedom of speech in supporting an amendment on the law of libel, and for ceding to the Press the right of reporting debates in Parliament.

1772. Opposes petition of certain of the clergy to be relieved from subscription to the articles.

1773. Visits France, and is entertained by Madame du Deffand, and meets the Encyclopaedists in the *salon* of Mlle. de l'Esperasse (February). Supports Bill for relief of Protestant Dissenters from the provisions of the Test Act.

1774. *Speech on American Taxation* (April 19). Fox, having left North's Ministry in 1772, joins the Rockingham Whigs under Burke's influence. Burke returned for Bristol at the General Election (November).

1775. His Resolutions for Conciliation with the Colonies proposed and lost (March 22). War in America begins with the Battle of Lexington (April).

1776. Supports two motions for Conciliation.

1777. *Letter to the Sheriffs of Bristol.*

1778. Powerful speech against employment of Indians in America (February). Death of Lord Chatham (May 11). Burke offends his constituents by supporting measures to relieve Irish trade and remove penalties on Roman Catholics.

1780. Brings in Bill for Economical Reform (February; rejected in the Lords next session). Loses his seat at Bristol (September), and is elected for Malton.

1782. North resigns (March); Rockingham Ministry, with Burke Paymaster of the Forces. His economical reforms, in a reduced form, become law.

July 1, death of Rockingham. Shelburne Ministry. Resignation of Fox and Burke.

Britain acknowledges Independence of the United States (December).

1783. Preliminaries of the Peace of Versailles signed (January). Coalition of Fox and North. Shelburne resigns (February 24). The Portland Ministry; Burke again Paymaster. Speech on Fox's East India Bill (December 1). The Bill is lost in the Lords, and the Ministry falls (December 18). Pitt Prime Minister.

1785. Speech on the Nabob of Arcot's debts (February 28). Factiously opposes Pitt's resolutions for liberating Irish commerce (July).

1786. Burke moves impeachment of Warren Hastings (June 1).

1788. Trial of Warren Hastings begins (February 13). Burke supports motion for inquiry into the slave-trade, and desires its total abolition (May).

1789. Meeting of the Estates General at Versailles (May). Storm of the Bastille (July 14). Abolition of feudal rights in France (August 4). The king and queen forced to ride in triumphal procession from Versailles to Paris (October 6).

1790. Debate in House of Commons on Army Estimates; Burke differs from Fox on conduct of French Army, and breaks with Sheridan (February 9). Burke opposes Fox's motion to repeal the Test Act (March 2). Feast of the Federation in Paris (July). *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (published November 1).

1791. Letter to a Member of the National Assembly (January). Burke renounces his friendship with Fox (May 6). Flight of Louis XVI to Varennes (June). *Appeal from the New to the Old Whigs* (published August). *Thoughts on French Affairs* (written December).

1792. Letter to Sir Hercules Langrishe on Roman Catholic disabilities in Ireland (written January). France declares war on Austria and Prussia (April). Overthrow of the French Monarchy (August 10). Burke, during passage of the Aliens Bill, enacts his 'dagger-scene' (December 28).

1793. Execution of Louis XVI (January 21). France declares war on England (February 1). Committee of Public Safety instituted (April). Fall of the Girondins (June); execution of Marie Antoinette (October); Reign of Terror (begins November).

1794. Burke concludes his part in the impeachment of Hastings by the speech in answer to the defence (April). Retires from

Parliament (July). Formal union of Portland Whigs with the Ministry (July). Fall of Robespierre (July 28); death of Burke's son Richard (August). Grant of his first pension of £1,200.

1795. Grant of two further pensions, amounting together to £2,500. Peace concluded at Basel between Prussia and France (April 5). Acquittal of Hastings (April 23). Emergence of Napoleon Buonaparte, who suppresses the Insurrection of the Middle Classes against the Convention (Vendémiaire 13: October 5). *Thoughts and Details on Scarcity* (presented to Pitt November).

1796. *A Letter to a Noble Lord* (February). *Letters on a Regicide Peace*, i and ii.

1797. Burke dies, July 9.

HAZLITT'S Essay  
ON THE CHARACTER OF BURKE

(First prefixed to extracts from Burke in *The Eloquence of the British Senate*, 1807; afterwards included in *Winterslow*, 1839.)

THERE is no single speech of Mr. Burke which can convey a satisfactory idea of his powers of mind: to do him justice, it would be necessary to quote all his works; the only specimen of Burke is, *all that he wrote*. With respect to most other speakers, a specimen is generally enough, or more than enough. When you are acquainted with their manner, and see what proficiency they have made in the mechanical exercise of their profession, with what facility they can borrow a simile, or round a period, how dexterously they can argue, and object, and rejoin, you are <sup>10</sup> satisfied; there is no other difference in their speeches than what arises from the difference of the subjects. But this was not the case with Burke. He brought his subjects along with him; he drew his materials from himself. The only limits which circumscribed his variety were the stores of his own mind. His stock of ideas did not consist of a few meagre facts, meagrely stated, of half a dozen commonplaces tortured into a thousand different ways; but his mine of wealth was a profound understanding, inexhaustible as the human heart, and various as the sources <sup>20</sup> of human nature. He therefore enriched every subject to which he applied himself, and new subjects were only the occasions of calling forth fresh powers of mind which had not been before exerted. It would therefore be in vain to look for the proof of his powers in any one of his speeches

or writings: they all contain some additional proof of power. In speaking of Burke, then, I shall speak of the whole compass and circuit of his mind—not of that small part or section of him which I have been able to give: to do otherwise would be like the story of the man who put the brick in his pocket, thinking to show it as the model of a house. I have been able to manage pretty well with respect to all my other speakers, and curtailed them down without remorse. It was easy to reduce them within certain limits, 10 to fix their spirit, and condense their variety; by having a certain quantity given, you might infer all the rest; it was only the same thing over again. But who can bind Proteus, or confine the roving flight of genius?

Burke's writings are better than his speeches, and indeed his speeches are writings. But he seemed to feel himself more at ease, to have a fuller possession of his faculties in addressing the public than in addressing the House of Commons. Burke was *raised* into public life; and he seems to have been prouder of this new dignity than became so 20 great a man. For this reason, most of his speeches have a sort of parliamentary preamble to them: he seems fond of coquetting with the House of Commons, and is perpetually calling the Speaker out to dance a minuet with him before he begins. There is also something like an attempt to stimulate the superficial dullness of his hearers by exciting their surprise, by running into extravagance: and he sometimes demeans himself by condescending to what may be considered as bordering too much upon buffoonery, for the amusement of the company. Those lines of Milton 30 were admirably applied to him by some one—‘The elephant to make them sport wreathed his proboscis lithe.’ The truth is, that he was out of his place in the House of Commons; he was eminently qualified to shine as a man of genius, as the instructor of mankind, as the brightest luminary of his age; but he had nothing in common

with that motley crew of knights, citizens, and burgesses. He could not be said to be 'native and endued unto that element'. He was above it; and never appeared like himself but when, forgetful of the idle clamours of party, and of the little views of little men, he applied to his country and the enlightened judgement of mankind.

I am not going to make an idle panegyric on Burke (he has no need of it); but I cannot help looking upon him as the chief boast and ornament of the English House of Commons. What has been said of him is, I think, strictly ~~10~~ true, that 'he was the most eloquent man of his time: his wisdom was greater than his eloquence'. The only public man that in my opinion can be put in any competition with him, is Lord Chatham; and he moved in a sphere so very remote that it is almost impossible to compare them. But though it would perhaps be difficult to determine which of them excelled most in his particular way, there is nothing in the world more easy than to point out in what their peculiar excellences consisted. They were in every respect the reverse of each other. Chatham's eloquence ~~20~~ was popular: his wisdom was altogether plain and practical. Burke's eloquence was that of the poet; of the man of high and unbounded fancy: his wisdom was profound and contemplative. Chatham's eloquence was calculated to make men *act*: Burke's was calculated to make them *think*. Chatham could have roused the fury of a multitude, and wielded their physical energy as he pleased: Burke's eloquence carried conviction into the mind of the retired and lonely student, opened the recesses of the human breast, and lighted up the face of nature around him. ~~30~~ Chatham supplied his hearers with motives to immediate action: Burke furnished them with *reasons* for action which might have little effect upon them at the time, but for which they would be the wiser and better all their lives after. In research, in originality, in variety of knowledge,

in richness of invention, in depth and comprehension of mind, Burke had as much the advantage of Lord Chatham as he was excelled by him in plain common sense, in strong feeling, in steadiness of purpose, in vehemence, in warmth, in enthusiasm, and energy of mind. Burke was the man of genius, of fine sense, and subtle reasoning ; Chatham was a man of clear understanding, of strong sense, and violent passions. Burke's mind was satisfied with speculation : Chatham's was essentially *active* ; it could not rest <sup>10</sup> without an object. The power which governed Burke's mind was his Imagination ; that which gave its *impetus* to Chatham was Will. The one was almost the creature of pure intellect, the other of physical temperament.

There are two very different ends which a man of genius may propose to himself, either in writing or speaking, and which will accordingly give birth to very different styles. He can have but one of these two objects ; either to enrich or strengthen the mind ; either to furnish us with new ideas, to lead the mind into new trains of thought, to which <sup>20</sup> it was before unused, and which it was incapable of striking out for itself ; or else to collect and embody what we already knew, to rivet our old impressions more deeply ; to make what was before plain still plainer, and to give to that which was familiar all the effect of novelty. In the one case we receive an accession to the stock of our ideas ; in the other, an additional degree of life and energy is infused into them : our thoughts continue to flow in the same channels, but their pulse is quickened and invigorated. I do not know how to distinguish these different styles <sup>30</sup> better than by calling them severally the inventive and refined, or the impressive and vigorous styles. It is only the subject-matter of eloquence, however, which is allowed to be remote or obscure. The things themselves may be subtle and recondite, but they must be dragged out of their obscurity and brought struggling to the light ; they

must be rendered plain and palpable (as far as it is in the wit of man to do so), or they are no longer eloquence. That which by its natural impenetrability, and in spite of every effort, remains dark and difficult, which is impervious to every ray, on which the imagination can shed no lustre, which can be clothed with no beauty, is not a subject for the orator or poet. At the same time it cannot be expected that abstract truths or profound observations should ever be placed in the same strong and dazzling points of view as natural objects and mere matters of fact. It is enough <sup>10</sup> if they receive a reflex and borrowed lustre, like that which cheers the first dawn of morning, where the effect of surprise and novelty gilds every object, and the joy of beholding another world gradually emerging out of the gloom of night, 'a new creation rescued from his reign,' fills the mind with a sober rapture. Philosophical eloquence is in writing what *chiaro-scuro* is in painting; he would be a fool who should object that the colours in the shaded part of a picture were not so bright as those on the opposite side; the eye of the connoisseur receives an equal delight <sup>20</sup> from both, balancing the want of brilliancy and effect with the greater delicacy of the tints, and difficulty of the execution. In judging of Burke, therefore, we are to consider, first, the style of eloquence which he adopted, and, secondly, the effects which he produced with it. If he did not produce the same effects on vulgar minds as some others have done, it was not for want of power, but from the turn and direction of his mind.<sup>1</sup> It was because his subjects, his ideas, his arguments, were less vulgar. The question is not whether he brought certain truths equally home to us, <sup>30</sup> but how much nearer he brought them than they were before. In my opinion, he united the two extremes of

<sup>1</sup> For instance, he produced less effect on the mob that compose the English House of Commons, than Chatham or Fox, or even Pitt.

refinement and strength in a higher degree than any other writer whatever.

The subtlety of his mind was undoubtedly that which rendered Burke a less popular writer and speaker than he otherwise would have been. It weakened the impression of his observations upon others, but I cannot admit that it weakened the observations themselves ; that it took anything from their real weight or solidity. Coarse minds think all that is subtle futile : that because it is not gross and obvious and palpable to the senses, it is therefore light and frivolous, and of no importance in the real affairs of life ; thus making their own confined understandings the measure of truth, and supposing that whatever they do not distinctly perceive is nothing. Seneca, who was not one of the vulgar, also says, that subtle truths are those which have the least substance in them, and consequently approach nearest to nonentity. But for my own part I cannot help thinking that the most important truths must be the most refined and subtle ; for that very reason, that they must comprehend a great number of particulars, and instead of referring to any distinct or positive fact, must point out the combined effects of an extensive chain of causes, operating gradually, remotely, and collectively, and therefore imperceptibly. General principles are not the less true or important because from their nature they elude immediate observation ; they are like the air, which is not the less necessary because we neither see nor feel it, or like that secret influence which binds the world together, and holds the planets in their orbits. The very same persons who are the most forward to laugh at all systematic reasoning as idle and impertinent, you will the next moment hear exclaiming bitterly against the baleful effects of new-fangled systems of philosophy, or gravely descanting on the immense importance of instilling sound principles of morality into the mind. It would not be a bold conjecture,

but an obvious truism, to say, that all the great changes which have been brought about in the moral world, either for the better or worse, have been introduced, not by the bare statement of facts, which are things already known, and which must always operate nearly in the same manner, but by the development of certain opinions and abstract principles of reasoning on life and manners, or the origin of society and man's nature in general, which being obscure and uncertain, vary from time to time, and produce corresponding changes in the human mind. They are the 10 wholesome dew and rain, or the mildew and pestilence that silently destroy. To this principle of generalization all wise lawgivers, and the systems of philosophers, owe their influence.

It has always been with me a test of the sense and candour of any one belonging to the opposite party, whether he allowed Burke to be a great man. Of all the persons of this description that I have ever known, I never met with above one or two who would make this concession ; whether it was that party feelings ran too high to 20 admit of any real candour, or whether it was owing to an essential vulgarity in their habits of thinking, they all seemed to be of opinion that he was a wild enthusiast, or a hollow sophist, who was to be answered by bits of facts, by smart logic, by shrewd questions, and idle songs. They looked upon him as a man of disordered intellects, because he reasoned in a style to which they had not been used, and which confounded their dim perceptions. If you said that though you differed with him in sentiment, yet you thought him an admirable reasoner, and a close observer 30 of human nature, you were answered with a loud laugh, and some hackneyed quotation. 'Alas ! Leviathan was not so tamed ! ' They did not know whom they had to contend with. The corner-stone, which the builders rejected, became the head-corner, though to the Jews

a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks foolishness; for, indeed, I cannot discover that he was much better understood by those of his own party, if we may judge from the little affinity there is between his mode of reasoning and theirs. The simple clue to all his reasonings on politics is, I think, as follows. He did not agree with some writers that that mode of government is necessarily the best which is the cheapest. He saw in the construction of society other principles at work, and other capacities of fulfilling 10 the desires, and perfecting the nature of man, besides those of securing the equal enjoyment of the means of animal life, and doing this at as little expense as possible. He thought that the wants and happiness of men were not to be provided for, as we provide for those of a herd of cattle, merely by attending to their physical necessities. He thought more nobly of his fellows. He knew that man had affections and passions and powers of imagination, as well as hunger and thirst, and the sense of heat and cold. He took his idea of political society from the pattern of private 20 life, wishing, as he himself expresses it, to incorporate the domestic charities with the orders of the state, and to blend them together. He strove to establish an analogy between the compact that binds together the community at large, and that which binds together the several families that compose it. He knew the rules that form the basis of private morality are not founded in reason, that is, in the abstract properties of those things which are the subjects of them, but in the nature of man, and his capacity of being affected by certain things from habit, from imagina- 30 tion, and sentiment, as well as from reason.

Thus, the reason why a man ought to be attached to his wife and children is not, surely, that they are better than others (for in this case every one else ought to be of the same opinion), but because he must be chiefly interested in those things which are nearest to him, and with which he

is best acquainted, since his understanding cannot reach equally to everything ; because he must be most attached to those objects which he has known the longest, and which by their situation have actually affected him the most, not those which in themselves are the most affecting whether they have ever made any impression on him or no ; that is, because he is by his nature the creature of habit and feeling, and because it is reasonable that he should act in conformity to his nature. Burke was so far right in saying that it is no objection to an institution that it is founded <sup>10</sup> in *prejudice*, but the contrary, if that prejudice is natural and right ; that is, if it arises from those circumstances which are properly subjects of feeling and association, not from any defect or perversion of the understanding in those things which fall strictly under its jurisdiction. On this profound maxim he took his stand. Thus he contended, that the prejudice in favour of nobility was natural and proper, and fit to be encouraged by the positive institutions of society : not on account of the real or personal merit of the individuals, but because such an institution <sup>20</sup> has a tendency to enlarge and raise the mind, to keep alive the memory of past greatness, to connect the different ages of the world together, to carry back the imagination over a long tract of time, and feed it with the contemplation of remote events : because it is natural to think highly of that which inspires us with high thoughts, which has been connected for many generations with splendour, and affluence, and dignity, and power, and privilege. He also conceived, that by transferring the respect from the person to the thing, and thus rendering it steady and permanent, <sup>30</sup> the mind would be habitually formed to sentiments of deference, attachment, and fealty, to whatever else demanded its respect : that it would be led to fix its view on what was elevated and lofty, and be weaned from that low and narrow jealousy which never willingly or heartily

admits of any superiority in others, and is glad of every opportunity to bring down all excellence to a level with its own miserable standard. Nobility did not, therefore, exist to the prejudice of the other orders of the state, but by and for them. The inequality of the different orders of society did not destroy the unity and harmony of the whole. The health and well-being of the moral world was to be promoted by the same means as the beauty of the natural world ; by contrast, by change, by light and shade, by variety of parts, by order and proportion. To think of reducing all mankind to the same insipid level, seemed to him the same absurdity as to destroy the inequalities of surface in a country, for the benefit of agriculture and commerce. In short, he believed that the interests of men in society should be consulted, and their several stations and employments assigned, with a view to their nature, not as physical, but as moral beings, so as to nourish their hopes, to lift their imagination, to enliven their fancy, to rouse their activity, to strengthen their virtue, and to furnish the greatest number of objects of pursuit and means of enjoyment to beings constituted as man is, consistently with the order and stability of the whole.

The same reasoning might be extended farther. I do not say that his arguments are conclusive : but they are profound and *true*, as far as they go. There may be disadvantages and abuses necessarily interwoven with his scheme, or opposite advantages of infinitely greater value, to be derived from another order of things and state of society. This, however, does not invalidate either the truth or importance of Burke's reasoning ; since the advantages he points out as connected with the mixed form of government are really and necessarily inherent in it : since they are compatible, in the same degree, with no other ; since the principle itself on which he rests his argument (whatever we may think of the application) is of

the utmost weight and moment ; and since, on whichever side the truth lies, it is impossible to make a fair decision without having the opposite side of the question clearly and fully stated to us. This Burke has done in a masterly manner. He presents to you one view or face of society. Let him who thinks he can, give the reverse side with equal force, beauty, and clearness. It is said, I know, that truth is *one* ; but to this I cannot subscribe, for it appears to me that truth is *many*. There are as many truths as there are things and causes of action and contradictory principles at work in society. In making up the account of good and evil, indeed, the final result must be one way or the other ; but the particulars on which that result depends are infinite and various.

It will be seen from what I have said, that I am very far from agreeing with those who think that Burke was a man without understanding, and a merely florid writer. There are two causes which have given rise to this calumny ; namely, that narrowness of mind which leads men to suppose that the truth lies entirely on the side of their own opinions, and that whatever does not make for them is absurd and irrational ; secondly, a trick we have of confounding reason with judgement, and supposing that it is merely the province of the understanding to pronounce sentence, and not to give evidence, or argue the case ; in short, that it is a passive, not an active faculty. Thus there are persons who never run into any extravagance, because they are so buttressed up with the opinions of others on all sides, that they cannot lean much to one side or the other ; they are so little moved with any kind of reasoning, that they remain at an equal distance from every extreme, and are never very far from the truth, because the slowness of their faculties will not suffer them to make much progress in error. These are persons of great judgement. The scales of the mind are pretty sure to

remain even, when there is nothing in them. In this sense of the word, Burke must be allowed to have wanted judgement, by all those who think that he was wrong in his conclusions. The accusation of want of judgement, in fact, only means that you yourself are of a different opinion. But if in arriving at one error he discovered a hundred truths, I should consider myself a hundred times more indebted to him than if, stumbling on that which I consider as the right side of the question, he had committed a hundred absurdities in striving to establish his point.

I speak of him now merely as an author, or as far as I and other readers are concerned with him ; at the same time, I should not differ from any one who may be disposed to contend that the consequences of his writings as instruments of political power have been tremendous, fatal, such as no exertion of wit or knowledge or genius can ever counteract or atone for.

Burke also gave a hold to his antagonists by mixing up sentiment and imagery with his reasoning ; so that being unused to such a sight in the region of politics, they were deceived, and could not discern the fruit from the flowers. Gravity is the cloak of wisdom ; and those who have nothing else think it an insult to affect the one without the other, because it destroys the only foundation on which their pretensions are built. The easiest part of reason is dullness ; the generality of the world are therefore concerned in discouraging any example of unnecessary brilliancy that might tend to show that the two things do not always go together. Burke in some measure dissolved the spell. It was discovered, that his gold was not the less valuable for being wrought into elegant shapes, and richly embossed with curious figures ; that the solidity of a building is not destroyed by adding to it beauty and ornament ; and that the strength of a man's understanding is not always to be estimated in exact proportion to his want of

imagination. His understanding was not the less real, because it was not the only faculty he possessed. He justified the description of the poet—

How charming is divine philosophy !  
Not harsh and crabbed as dull fools suppose,  
But musical as is Apollo's lute !

Those who object to this union of grace and beauty with reason, are in fact weak-sighted people, who cannot distinguish the noble and majestic form of Truth from that of her sister Folly, if they are dressed both alike ! But 10 there is always a difference even in the adventitious ornaments they wear, which is sufficient to distinguish them.

Burke was so far from being a gaudy or flowery writer that he was one of the severest writers we have. His words are the most like things ; his style is the most strictly suited to the subject. He unites every extreme and every variety of composition ; the lowest and the meanest words and descriptions with the highest. He exults in the display of power, in showing the extent, the force, and intensity of his ideas ; he is led on by the mere impulse and vehe- 20 mence of his fancy, not by the affectation of dazzling his readers by gaudy conceits or pompous images. He was completely carried away by his subject. He had no other object but to produce the strongest impression on his reader, by giving the truest, the most characteristic, the fullest, and most forcible description of things, trusting to the power of his own mind to mould them into grace and beauty. He did not produce a splendid effect by setting fire to the light vapours that float in the regions of fancy, as the chemists make fine colours with phosphorus, but by 30 the eagerness of his blows struck fire from the flint, and melted the hardest substances in the furnace of his imagination. The wheels of his imagination did not catch fire from the rottenness of the materials, but from the rapidity of

their motion. One would suppose, to hear people talk of Burke, that his style was such as would have suited the *Lady's Magazine*; soft, smooth, showy, tender, insipid, full of fine words, without any meaning. The essence of the gaudy or glittering style consists in producing a momentary effect by fine words and images brought together, without order or connexion. Burke most frequently produced an effect by the remoteness and novelty of his combinations, by the force of contrast, by the striking <sup>10</sup> manner in which the most opposite and unpromising materials were harmoniously blended together; not by laying his hands on all the fine things he could think of, but by bringing together those things which he knew would blaze out into glorious light by their collision. The florid style is a mixture of affectation and commonplace. Burke's was a union of untameable vigour and originality.

Burke was not a verbose writer. If he sometimes multiplies words, it is not for want of ideas, but because <sup>20</sup> there are no words that fully express his ideas, and he tries to do it as well as he can by different ones. He had nothing of the *set* or formal style, the measured cadence, and stately phraseology of Johnson, and most of our modern writers. This style, which is what we understand by the *artificial*, is all in one key. It selects a certain set of words to represent all ideas whatever, as the most dignified and elegant, and excludes all others as low and vulgar. The words are not fitted to the things, but the things to the words. Everything is seen through a false medium. It is putting a mask <sup>30</sup> on the face of nature, which may indeed hide some specks and blemishes, but takes away all beauty, delicacy, and variety. It destroys all dignity or elevation, because nothing can be raised where all is on a level, and completely destroys all force, expression, truth, and character, by arbitrarily confounding the differences of things, and reduc-

ing everything to the same insipid standard. To suppose that this stiff uniformity can add anything to real grace or dignity is like supposing that the human body, in order to be perfectly graceful, should never deviate from its upright posture. Another mischief of this method is, that it confounds all ranks in literature. Where there is no room for variety, no discrimination, no nicety to be shown in matching the idea with its proper word, there can be no room for taste or elegance. A man must easily learn the art of writing when every sentence is to be cast in the <sup>10</sup> same mould : where he is only allowed the use of one word he cannot choose wrong, nor will he be in much danger of making himself ridiculous by affectation or false glitter, when, whatever subject he treats of, he must treat of it in the same way. This indeed is to wear golden chains for the sake of ornament.

Burke was altogether free from the pedantry which I have here endeavoured to expose. His style was as original, as expressive, as rich and varied, as it was possible ; his combinations were as exquisite, as playful, as happy, <sup>20</sup> as unexpected, as bold and daring, as his fancy. If anything, he ran into the opposite extreme of too great an inequality, if truth and nature could ever be carried to an extreme.

Those who are best acquainted with the writings and speeches of Burke will not think the praise I have here bestowed on them exaggerated. Some proof will be found of this in the following extracts. But the full proof must be sought in his works at large, and particularly in the *Thoughts on the Discontents* ; in his *Reflections on the French Revolution* ; in his *Letter to the Duke of Bedford* ; and in the *Regicide Peace*. The two last of these are perhaps the most remarkable of all his writings, from the contrast they afford to each other. The one is the most delightful exhibition of wild and brilliant fancy that is to be found in English

prose, but it is too much like a beautiful picture painted upon gauze ; it wants something to support it : the other is without ornament, but it has all the solidity, the weight, the gravity of a judicial record. It seems to have been written with a certain constraint upon himself, and to show those who said he could not *reason* that his arguments might be stripped of their ornaments without losing anything of their force. It is certainly, of all his works, that in which he has shown most power of logical deduction, 10 and the only one in which he has made any important use of facts. In general he certainly paid little attention to them : they were the playthings of his mind. He saw them as he pleased, not as they were ; with the eye of the philosopher or the poet, regarding them only in their general principle, or as they might serve to decorate his subject. This is the natural consequence of much imagination : things that are probable are elevated into the rank of realities. To those who can reason on the essences of things, or who can invent according to nature, the exper- 20 mental proof is of little value. This was the case with Burke. In the present instance, however, he seems to have forced his mind into the service of facts ; and he succeeded completely. His comparison between our connexion with France or Algiers, and his account of the conduct of the war, are as clear, as convincing, as forcible examples of this kind of reasoning, as are anywhere to be met with. Indeed I do not think there is anything in Fox (whose mind was purely historical), or in Chatham (who attended to feelings more than facts), that will bear a com- 30 parison with them.

Burke has been compared to Cicero—I do not know for what reason. Their excellences are as different, and indeed as opposite, as they can well be. Burke had not the polished elegance, the glossy neatness, the artful regularity, the exquisite modulation of Cicero. He had a thousand times

more richness and originality of mind, more strength and pomp of diction.

It has been well observed, that the ancients had no word that properly expresses what we mean by the word *genius*. They perhaps had not the thing. Their minds appear to have been too exact, too retentive, too minute and subtle, too sensible to the external differences of things, too passive under their impressions, to admit of those bold and rapid combinations, those lofty flights of fancy, which, glancing from heaven to earth, unite the most opposite extremes, 10 and draw the happiest illustrations from things the most remote. Their ideas were kept too confined and distinct by the material form or vehicle in which they were conveyed to unite cordially together, to be melted down in the imagination. Their metaphors are taken from things of the same class, not from things of different classes ; the general analogy, not the individual feeling, directs them in their choice. Hence, as Dr. Johnson observed, their similes are either repetitions of the same idea, or so obvious and general as not to lend any additional force to it ; as 20 when a huntress is compared to Diana, or a warrior rushing into battle to a lion rushing on his prey. Their *forte* was exquisite art and perfect imitation. Witness their statues and other things of the same kind. But they had not that high and enthusiastic fancy which some of our own writers have shown. For the proof of this, let any one compare Milton and Shakespeare with Homer and Sophocles, or Burke with Cicero.

It may be asked whether Burke was a poet. He was so only in the general vividness of his fancy, and in richness 30 of invention. There may be poetical passages in his works, but I certainly think that his writings in general are quite distinct from poetry ; and that for the reason before given, namely, that the subject-matter of them is not poetical. The finest part of them are illustrations or personifications

of dry abstract ideas ;<sup>1</sup> and the union between the idea and the illustration is not of that perfect and pleasing kind as to constitute poetry, or indeed to be admissible, but for the effect intended to be produced by it ; that is, by every means in our power to give animation and attraction to subjects in themselves barren of ornament, but which at the same time are pregnant with the most important consequences, and in which the understanding and the passions are equally interested.

10 I have heard it remarked by a person, to whose opinion I would sooner submit than to a general council of critics, that the sound of Burke's prose is not musical ; that it wants cadence ; and that instead of being so lavish of his imagery as is generally supposed, he seemed to him to be rather parsimonious in the use of it, always expanding and making the most of his ideas. This may be true if we compare him with some of our poets, or perhaps with some of our early prose writers, but not if we compare him with any of our political writers or parliamentary speakers.

20 There are some very fine things of Lord Bolingbroke's on the same subjects, but not equal to Burke's. As for Junius, he is at the head of his class ; but that class is not the highest. He has been said to have more dignity than Burke. Yes—if the stalk of a giant is less dignified than the strut of a *petit-maitre*. I do not mean to speak disrespectfully of Junius, but grandeur is not the character of his composition ; and if it is not to be found in Burke it is to be found nowhere.

<sup>1</sup> As in the comparison of the British Constitution to the 'proud keep of Windsor', &c., the most splendid passage in his works.

From COLERIDGE'S Essay  
*ON THE GROUNDS OF GOVERNMENT*

(Published in *The Friend*, October 12, 1809.)

I DO not mean, that this great man supported different principles at different eras of his political life. On the contrary, no man was ever more like himself. From his first published speech on the American colonies to his last posthumous tracts, we see the same man, the same doctrines, the same uniform wisdom of practical counsels, the same reasoning, and the same prejudices against all abstract grounds, against all deduction of practice from theory. The inconsistency to which I allude, is of a different kind: it is the want of congruity in the principles 10 appealed to in different parts of the same work, it is an apparent versatility of the principle with the occasion. If his opponents are theorists, then everything is to be founded on prudence, on mere calculations of expediency; and every man is represented as acting according to the state of his own immediate self-interest. Are his opponents calculators? Then calculation itself is represented as a sort of crime. God has given us feelings, and we are to obey them; and the most absurd prejudices become venerable, to which these feelings have given consecration. 20 I have not forgotten that Burke himself defended these half contradictions, on the pretext of balancing the too much on the one side by a too much on the other. But never can I believe, but that the straight line must needs be the nearest; and that where there is the most, and the most unalloyed truth, there will be the greatest and most permanent power of persuasion. But the fact was, that Burke in his public character found himself, as it were, in a Noah's ark, with a very few men and a great many beasts. He felt how much his immediate power was 30

lessened by the very circumstance of his measureless superiority to those about him: he acted, therefore, under a perpetual system of compromise—a compromise of greatness with meanness; a compromise of comprehension with narrowness; a compromise of the philosopher (who armed with the twofold knowledge of history and the laws of spirit looked, as with a telescope, far around and into the far distance) with the mere men of business, or with yet coarser intellects, who handled a truth, which they <sup>10</sup> were required to receive, as they would handle an ox, which they were desired to purchase. But why need I repeat what has been already said in so happy a manner by Goldsmith, of this great man:

Who, born for the universe, narrowed his mind,  
And to party gave up what was meant for mankind;  
Though fraught with all learning, yet straining his throat  
To persuade Tommy Townshend to give him a vote;  
Who, too deep for his hearers, still went on refining,  
And thought of convincing, while they thought of dining!

<sup>20</sup> And if in consequence it was his fate to 'cut blocks with a razor', I may be permitted to add, that, in respect of truth though not of genius, the weapon was injured by the misapplication.

From THOMAS MOORE'S  
*MEMOIRS OF SHERIDAN*  
(Published 1825.)

THE consequence, as is well known, of the new course taken by Burke was that the speeches, and writings which he henceforward produced, and in which, as usual, his judgement was run away with by his temper, form a com-

plete contrast, in spirit and tendency, to all that he had put on record in the former part of his life. He has thus left behind him two separate and distinct armouries of opinion, from which both Whig and Tory may furnish themselves with weapons, the most splendid, if not the most highly tempered, that ever Genius and Eloquence condescended to bequeath to Party. He has thus, too, by his own personal versatility attained in the world of politics what Shakespeare, by the versatility of his characters, achieved for the world in general,—namely, such a universality of application to all opinions and purposes, that it would be difficult for any statesman of any party to find himself placed in any situation for which he could not select some golden sentence from Burke, either to strengthen his position by reasoning, or illustrate and adorn it by fancy. While, therefore, our respect for the man himself is diminished by this want of moral identity observable through his life and writings, we are but the more disposed to admire the unrivalled genius which could thus throw itself out in so many various directions with equal splendour and vigour. In general political deserters lose their value and power in the very act, and bring little more than their treason to the new cause which they espouse :

Fortis in armis

*Caesareis Labienus erat ; nunc transfuga vilis.*

But Burke was mighty in either camp ; and it would have taken two great men to effect what he, by this division of himself, achieved. His mind, indeed, lies parted asunder in his works, like some vast continent severed by a convulsion in nature,—each portion peopled by its own giant race of opinions, differing altogether in features and language, and committed in eternal hostility with each other.

From DE QUINCEY'S Essay on  
*RHETORIC*

(First published in *Blackwood's Magazine*, December 1828.)

ALL hail to Edmund Burke, the supreme writer of his century, the man of the largest and finest understanding ! Upon that word, *understanding*, we lay a stress : for oh ! ye immortal donkeys, who have written 'about him and about him', with what an obstinate stupidity have ye brayed away for one third of a century about that which ye are pleased to call his 'fancy'. Fancy in your throats, ye miserable twaddlers ! as if Edmund Burke were the man to play with his fancy, for the purpose of separable ornament. He was a man of fancy in no other sense than as Lord Bacon was so, and Jeremy Taylor, and as all large and discursive thinkers are and must be : that is to say, the fancy which he had in common with all mankind, and very probably in no eminent degree, in him was urged into unusual activity under the necessities of his capacious understanding. His great and peculiar distinction was that he viewed all objects of the understanding under more relations than other men, and under more complex relations. According to the multiplicity of these relations, 20 a man is said to have a *large* understanding ; according to their subtilty, a *fine* one ; and in an angelic understanding, all things would appear to be related to all. Now, to apprehend and detect more relations, or to pursue them steadily, is a process absolutely impossible without the intervention of physical analogies. To say, therefore, that a man is a great thinker, or a fine thinker, is but another expression for saying that he has a *schematizing* (or, to use a plainer but less accurate expression, a figurative) understanding. In that sense, and for that purpose, 30 Burke is figurative : but understood, as he *has* been under-

stood by the long-eared race of his critics, not as thinking in and by his figures, but as deliberately laying them on by way of enamel or after-ornament,—not as *incarnating*, but simply as *dressing* his thoughts in imagery,—so understood, he is not the Burke of reality, but a poor fictitious Burke, modelled after the poverty of conception which belongs to his critics.

It is true, however, that in some rare cases Burke *did* indulge himself in a pure rhetorician's use of fancy; consciously and profusely lavishing his ornaments for mere 10 purposes of effect. Such a case occurs for instance in that admirable picture of the degradation of Europe, where he represents the different crowned heads as bidding against each other at Basle for the favour and countenance of Regicide. Others of the same kind there are in his ever memorable letter on the Duke of Bedford's attack upon him in the House of Lords: and one of these we shall here cite, disregarding its greater chance for being already familiar to the reader, upon two considerations; first, that it has all the appearance of being finished with the 20 most studied regard to effect; and secondly, for an interesting anecdote connected with it which we have never seen in print, but for which we have better authority than could be produced perhaps for most of those which are. The anecdote is, that Burke conversing with Dr. Lawrence and another gentleman on the *literary* value of his own writings, declared that the particular passage in the entire range of his works which had cost him the most labour, and upon which, as tried by a certain canon of his own, his labour seemed to himself to have been the most 30 successful, was the following:

[De Quincey proceeds partly to summarize, and partly to quote a passage from *A Letter to a Noble Lord*; see p. 175, beginning: 'The Crown has considered me . . . , to p. 176, 'imperiumque pater Romanus habebit.']]

This was the sounding passage which Burke alleged as the *chef-d'œuvre* of his rhetoric ; and the argument upon which he justified his choice is specious if not convincing. He laid it down as a maxim of composition, that every passage in a rhetorical performance which was brought forward prominently, and relied upon as a *key* (to use the language of war) in sustaining the main position of the writer, ought to involve a thought, an image, and a sentiment ; and such a synthesis he found in the passage  
10 which we have quoted. This criticism, over and above the pleasure which it always gives to hear a great man's opinion of himself, is valuable as showing that Burke, because negligent of trivial inaccuracies, was not at all the less anxious about the larger proprieties and decorums (for this passage, confessedly so laboured, has several instances of slovenliness in trifles) ; and that in the midst of his apparent hurry he carried out a jealous vigilance upon what he wrote, and the eye of a person practised in artificial effects. . . .

20 We are petrified to find him described by Dr. Whately as a writer 'qui variare cupit rem prodigaliter unam', and as on that account offensive to good taste. The understanding of Burke was even morbidly impatient of tautology ; progress and motion, everlasting motion, was a mere necessity of his intellect. We will venture to offer a king's ransom for one unequivocal case of tautology from the whole circle of Burke's writings. The *principium indiscernibilium*, upon which Leibnitz affirmed the impossibility of finding any two leaves of a tree  
30 that should be mere duplicates of each other in what we might call the *palmistry* of their natural markings, may be applied to Burke as safely as to nature ; no two propositions, we are satisfied, can be found in *him*, which do not contain a larger variety than is requisite to their sharp discrimination. . . .

The rhetorical manner is supported in the French writers chiefly by an abundance of *ohs* and *ahs* ; by interrogatories, apostrophes, and startling exclamations ; all which are mere mechanical devices for raising the style ; but in the substance of the composition, apart from its dress, there is nothing properly rhetorical. The leading thoughts in all <sup>10</sup> pulpit eloquence being derived from religion, and in fact the common inheritance of human nature, if they cannot be novel, for that very reason cannot be undignified ; but for the same reason they are apt to become unaffected and <sup>20</sup> trite unless varied and individualized by new infusions of thought and feeling. The smooth monotony of the leading religious topics, as managed by the French orators, receives under the treatment of Jeremy Taylor at each turn of the sentence a new flexure, or what may be called a separate *articulation* ;<sup>1</sup> old thoughts are surveyed from novel stations and under various angles ; and a field absolutely exhausted throws up eternally fresh verdure under the fructifying lava of burning imagery. *Human life*, for example, is *short* ; *human happiness is frail* ; how trite, <sup>20</sup>

<sup>1</sup> We may take the opportunity of noticing what it is that constitutes the peculiar and characterizing circumstance in Burke's manner of composition. It is this ; that under his treatment every truth, be it what it may, every thesis of a sentence, *grows* in the very act of unfolding it. Take any sentence you please from Dr. Johnson, suppose, and it will be found to contain a thought, good or bad, fully preconceived. Whereas in Burke, whatever may have been the preconception, it receives a new determination or inflexion at every clause of the sentence. Some collateral adjunct of the main proposition, some temperament or restraint, some oblique glance at its remote affinities, will invariably be found to attend the progress of his sentences, like the spray from a waterfall, or the scintillations from the iron under the blacksmith's hammer. Hence whilst a writer of Dr. Johnson's class seems only to look back upon his thoughts, Burke looks forward, and does in fact advance and change his own station concurrently with the advance of the sentences. This peculiarity is no doubt in some degree due to the habit of extempore speaking, but not to that only.

how obvious a thesis ! Yet in the beginning of the *Holy Dying*, upon that simplest of themes how magnificent a descant ! Variations the most original upon a ground the most universal, and a sense of novelty diffused over truths coeval with human life ! Finally, it may be remarked of the imagery in the French rhetoric that it is thinly sown, commonplace, deficient in splendour, and above all merely ornamental ; that is to say, it does no more than echo and repeat what is already said in the thought which it  
 10 is brought to illustrate ; whereas in Jeremy Taylor and in Burke, it will be found usually to extend and amplify the thought, or to fortify it by some indirect argument of its truth. Thus for instance in the passage above quoted from Taylor, upon the insensibility of man to the continual mercies of God, at first view the mind is staggered by the apparent impossibility that so infinite a reality, and of so continual a recurrence, should escape our notice ; but the illustrative image, drawn from the case of a man standing at the bottom of the ocean, and yet insensible  
 20 to that world of waters above him, from the uniformity and equality of its pressure, flashes upon us with a sense of something equally marvellous in a case which we know to be a physical fact. We are thus reconciled to the proposition by the same image which illustrates it.

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From MACAULAY'S Essay  
 ON SOUTHEY'S COLLOQUIES ON  
 SOCIETY

(First published in the *Edinburgh Review*, January 1830.)

MR. BURKE assuredly possessed an understanding admirably fitted for the investigation of truth, an understanding stronger than that of any statesman, active or speculative, of the eighteenth century, stronger than

everything, except his own fierce and ungovernable sensibility. Hence he generally chose his side like a fanatic, and defended it like a philosopher. His conduct on the most important occasions of his life, at the time of the impeachment of Hastings for example, and at the time of the French Revolution, seems to have been prompted by those feelings and motives which Mr. Coleridge has so happily described,

Stormy pity, and the cherish'd lure  
Of pomp, and proud precipitance of soul. 10

Hindostan, with its vast cities, its gorgeous pagodas, its infinite swarms of dusky population, its long-descended dynasties, its stately etiquette, excited in a mind so capacious, so imaginative, and so susceptible, the most intense interest. The peculiarities of the costume, of the manners, and of the laws, the very mystery which hung over the language and origin of the people, seized his imagination. To plead under the ancient arches of Westminster Hall, in the name of the English people, at the bar of the English nobles, for great nations and kings separated 20 from him by half the world, seemed to him the height of human glory. Again, it is not difficult to perceive that his hostility to the French Revolution principally arose from the vexation which he felt at having all his old political associations disturbed, at seeing the well-known landmarks of states obliterated, and the names and distinctions with which the history of Europe had been filled for ages at once swept away. He felt like an antiquary whose shield had been scoured, or a connoisseur who found his Titian retouched. But, however he came by an opinion, 30 he had no sooner got it than he did his best to make out a legitimate title to it. His reason, like a spirit in the service of an enchanter, though spell-bound, was still mighty. It did whatever work his passions and his imagination might impose. But it did that work, how-

ever arduous, with marvellous dexterity and vigour. His course was not determined by argument; but he could defend the wildest course by arguments more plausible than those by which common men support opinions which they have adopted after the fullest deliberation. Reason has scarcely ever displayed, even in those well constituted minds of which she occupies the throne, so much power and energy as in the lowest offices of that imperial servitude.

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From MACAULAY'S Essay  
ON BACON

(First published in the *Edinburgh Review*, July 1837.)

10 ONE of the most remarkable circumstances in the history of Bacon's mind is the order in which its powers expanded themselves. With him the fruit came first and remained till the last; the blossoms did not appear till late. In general, the development of the fancy is to the development of the judgement what the growth of a girl is to the growth of a boy. The fancy attains at an earlier period to the perfection of its beauty, its power, and its fruitfulness; and as it is first to ripen, it is also first to fade. It has generally lost something of its bloom and freshness before  
20 the sterner faculties have reached maturity; and is commonly withered and barren while those faculties still retain all their energy. It rarely happens that the fancy and the judgement grow together. It happens still more rarely that the judgement grows faster than the fancy. This seems, however, to have been the case with Bacon. His boyhood and youth appear to have been singularly sedate. His gigantic scheme of philosophical reform is said by some writers to have been planned before he was fifteen, and

was undoubtedly planned while he was still young. He observed as vigilantly, meditated as deeply, and judged as temperately when he gave his first work to the world as at the close of his long career. But in eloquence, in sweetness and variety of expression, and in richness of illustration, his later writings are far superior to those of his youth. In this respect the history of his mind bears some resemblance to the history of the mind of Burke. The treatise on the Sublime and Beautiful, though written on a subject which the coldest metaphysician could hardly treat without being occasionally betrayed into florid writing, is the most unadorned of all Burke's works. It appeared when he was twenty-five or twenty-six. When, at forty, he wrote the *Thoughts on the Causes of the existing Discontents*, his reason and his judgement had reached their full maturity ; but his eloquence was still in its splendid dawn. At fifty, his rhetoric was quite as rich as good taste would permit ; and when he died, at almost seventy, it had become ungracefully gorgeous. In his youth he wrote on the emotions produced by mountains and cascades, 20 by the master-pieces of painting and sculpture, by the faces and necks of beautiful women, in the style of a parliamentary report. In his old age, he discussed treatises and tariffs in the most fervid and brilliant language of romance. It is strange that the *Essay on the Sublime and Beautiful*, and the *Letter to a Noble Lord*, should be the productions of one man. But it is far more strange that the *Essay* should have been a production of his youth, and the *Letter* of his old age.

From MATTHEW ARNOLD'S Essay on  
*THE FUNCTION OF CRITICISM*

(First published in the *National Review*, November 1864.)

AT first sight it seems strange that out of the immense stir of the French Revolution and its age should not have come a crop of works of genius equal to that which came out of the stir of the great productive time of Greece, or out of that of the Renaissance, with its powerful episode the Reformation. But the truth is that the stir of the French Revolution took a character which essentially distinguished it from such movements as these. These were, in the main, disinterestedly intellectual and spiritual movements ; movements in which the human spirit looked for its satisfaction in itself and in the increased play of its own activity. The French Revolution took a political, practical character. The movement which went on in France under the old régime, from 1700 to 1789, was far more really akin than that of the Revolution itself to the movement of the Renaissance ; the France of Voltaire and Rousseau told far more powerfully upon the mind of Europe than the France of the Revolution. Goethe reproached this last expressly with having ' thrown quiet culture back '. Nay, and the true key to how much in our Byron, even in our Wordsworth, is this !—that they had their source in a great movement of feeling, not in a great movement of mind. The French Revolution, however,—that object of so much blind love and so much blind hatred,—found undoubtedly its motive-power in the intelligence of men and not in their practical sense ;—this is what distinguishes it from the English Revolution of Charles the First's time. This is what makes it a more spiritual event than our Revolution, an event of much more powerful and world-wide interest, though practically less

successful ;—it appeals to an order of ideas which are universal, certain, permanent. 1789 asked of a thing, Is it rational ? 1642 asked of a thing, Is it legal ? or, when it went furthest, Is it according to conscience ? This is the English fashion ; a fashion to be treated, within its own sphere, with the highest respect ; for its success, within its own sphere, has been prodigious. But what is law in one place, is not law in another ; what is law here to-day, is not law even here to-morrow ; and as for conscience, what is binding on one man's conscience is not binding <sup>10</sup> on another's. The old woman who threw her stool at the head of the surpliced minister in St. Giles's Church at Edinburgh obeyed an impulse to which millions of the human race may be permitted to remain strangers. But the prescriptions of reason are absolute, unchanging, of universal validity ; *to count by tens is the easiest way of counting*,—that is a proposition of which every one, from here to the Antipodes, feels the force ; at least, I should say so, if we did not live in a country where it is not impossible that any morning we may find a letter in *The 20 Times* declaring that a decimal coinage is an absurdity. That a whole nation should have been penetrated with an enthusiasm for pure reason, and with an ardent zeal for making its prescriptions triumph, is a very remarkable thing, when we consider how little of mind, or anything so worthy and quickening as mind, comes into the motives which alone, in general, impel great masses of men. In spite of the extravagant directions given to this enthusiasm, in spite of the crimes and follies in which it lost itself, the French Revolution derives from the force, truth, and <sup>30</sup> universality of the ideas which it took for its law, and from the passion with which it could inspire a multitude for these ideas, a unique and still living power ; it is—it will probably long remain—the greatest, the most animating event in history. And, as no sincere passion for the things

of the mind, even though it turn out in many respects an unfortunate passion, is ever quite thrown away and quite barren of good, France has reaped from hers one fruit, the natural and legitimate fruit, though not precisely the grand fruit she expected ; she is the country in Europe where *the people* is most alive.

But the mania for giving an immediate political and practical application to all these fine ideas of the reason was fatal. Here an Englishman is in his element : on this theme we can all go on for hours. And all we are in the habit of saying on it has undoubtedly a great deal of truth. Ideas cannot be too much prized in and for themselves, cannot be too much lived with ; but to transport them abruptly into the world of politics and practice, violently to revolutionize this world to their bidding,—that is quite another thing. There is the world of ideas and there is the world of practice ; the French are often for suppressing the one and the English the other ; but neither is to be suppressed. A member of the House of Commons said to me the other day : ‘That a thing is an anomaly, I consider to be no objection to it whatever.’ I venture to think he was wrong ; that a thing is an anomaly *is* an objection to it, but absolutely and in the sphere of ideas : it is not necessarily, under such and such circumstances, or at such and such a moment, an objection to it in the sphere of politics and practice. Joubert has said beautifully : ‘C'est la force et le droit qui règlent toutes choses dans le monde ; la force en attendant le droit.’ (Force and right are the governors of this world ; force till right is ready.) Force till right is ready ; and till right is ready, force, the existing order of things, is justified, is the legitimate ruler. But right is something moral, and implies inward recognition, free assent of the will ; we are not ready for right,—right, so far as we are concerned, *is not ready*,—until we have attained this sense of seeing it and willing it. The way

in which for us it may change and transform force, the existing order of things, and become, in its turn, the legitimate ruler of the world, will depend on the way in which, when our time comes, we see it and will it. Therefore for other people, enamoured of their own newly discerned right, to attempt to impose it upon us as ours, and violently to substitute their right for our force, is an act of tyranny, and to be resisted. It sets at nought the second great half of our maxim, *force till right is ready*. This was the grand error of the French Revolution ; and 10 its movement of ideas, by quitting the intellectual sphere and rushing furiously into the political sphere, ran, indeed, a prodigious and memorable course, but produced no such intellectual fruit as the movement of ideas of the Renaissance, and created, in opposition to itself, what I may call an *epoch of concentration*. The great force of that epoch of concentration was England ; and the great voice of that epoch of concentration was Burke. It is the fashion to treat Burke's writings on the French Revolution as superannuated and conquered by the event ; as the eloquent 20 but unphilosophical tirades of bigotry and prejudice. I will not deny that they are often disfigured by the violence and passion of the moment, and that in some directions Burke's view was bounded, and his observation therefore at fault ; but on the whole, and for those who can make the needful corrections, what distinguishes these writings is their profound, permanent, fruitful, philosophical truth ; they contain the true philosophy of an epoch of concentration, dissipate the heavy atmosphere which its own nature is apt to engender round it, and make its 30 resistance rational instead of mechanical.

But Burke is so great because, almost alone in England, he brings thought to bear upon politics, he saturates politics with thought. It is his accident that his ideas were at the service of an epoch of concentration, not of

an epoch of expansion ; it is his characteristic that he so lived by ideas, and had such a source of them welling up within him, that he could float even an epoch of concentration and English Tory politics with them. It does not hurt him that Dr. Price and the Liberals were enraged with him ; it does not even hurt him that George the Third and the Tories were enchanted with him. His greatness is that he lived in a world which neither English Liberalism nor English Toryism is apt to enter ;—the world of ideas, <sup>10</sup> not the world of catchwords and party habits. So far is it from being really true of him that he ' to party gave up what was meant for mankind ', that at the very end of his fierce struggle with the French Revolution, after all his invectives against its false pretensions, hollowness, and madness, with his sincere conviction of its mischievousness, he can close a memorandum on the best means of combating it, some of the last pages he ever wrote,—the *Thoughts on French Affairs*, in December 1791,—with these striking words.

[Here Arnold quotes the passage given on p. 159, under *The Indecipherable in the Revolution.*]

<sup>20</sup> That return of Burke upon himself has always seemed to me one of the finest things in English literature, or indeed in any literature. That is what I call living by ideas ; when one side of a question has long had your earnest support, when all your feelings are engaged, when you hear all round you no language but one, when your party talks this language like a steam-engine and can imagine no other,—still to be able to think, still to be irresistibly carried, if so it be, by the current of thought to the opposite side of the question, and, like Balaam, to <sup>30</sup> be unable to speak anything *but what the Lord has put in your mouth.* I know nothing more striking, and I must add that I know nothing more un-English.

## PERSONAL ESTIMATES

By Johnson

(From Boswell's *Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides*; published 1785.)

i

WE talked of Mr. Burke—Dr. Johnson said, he had great variety of knowledge, store of imagery, copiousness of language. ROBERTSON. ‘He has wit too.’ JOHNSON. ‘No, sir; he never succeeds there; ‘tis low, ‘tis conceit. I used to say Burke never once made a good joke. What I most envy Burke for is his being constantly the same. He is never what we call hum-drum; never unwilling to begin to talk, nor in haste to leave off. . . . Burke, sir, is such a man that if you met him for the first time in the street where you were stopped by a drove of oxen, and you <sup>10</sup> and he stepped aside to take shelter but for five minutes, he’d talk to you in such a manner that, when you parted, you would say, this is an extraordinary man.’ (August 15, 1773.)

ii

I OBSERVED that the character of Nicholson in this book [Sir George Mackenzie’s *Characteres Advocatorum*] resembled that of Burke: for it is said in one place, *in omnes lusus et iocos se saepe resolvebat*; and in another, *sed accepitris more e conspectu aliquando astantium sublimi se protrahens volatu, in praedam miro impetu descendebat*. JOHNSON. ‘No, <sup>20</sup> sir; I never heard Burke make a good joke in my life.’ BOSWELL. ‘But, sir, you will allow he is a hawk.’ Dr. Johnson, thinking that I meant this of his joking, said, ‘No, sir, he is not the hawk there. He is the beetle in the mire.’ I still adhered to my metaphor,—‘But he *soars* as the hawk’. JOHNSON. ‘Yes, sir; but he catches nothing.’ McLeod asked, what is the particular excellence of Burke’s eloquence? JOHNSON. ‘Copiousness and fertility of allu-

sion ; a power of diversifying his matter by placing it in various relations. Burke has great information and great command of language ; though, in my opinion, it has not in every respect the highest elegance.' BOSWELL. 'Do you think, sir, that Burke has read Cicero much ? ' JOHNSON. ' I don't believe it, sir. Burke has great knowledge, great fluency of words, and great promptness of ideas, so that he can speak with great illustration on any subject that comes before him. He is neither like Cicero, nor like <sup>10</sup> Demosthenes, nor like any one else, but speaks as well as he can.' (September 15, 1773.)

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*By Goldsmith*

(From *Retaliation*, written in March 1774.)

HERE lies our good Edmund, whose genius was such,  
 We scarcely can praise it or blame it too much ;  
 Who, born for the universe, narrowed his mind,  
 And to party gave up what was meant for mankind ;  
 Though fraught with all learning, yet straining his throat  
 To persuade Tommy Townshend to give him a vote ;  
 Who, too deep for his hearers, still went on refining,  
 And thought of convincing, while they thought of dining ;  
<sup>20</sup> Though equal to all things, for all things unfit ;  
 Too nice for a statesman, too proud for a wit,  
 For a patriot too cool, for a drudge disobedient,  
 And too fond of the *right* to pursue the *expedient*.  
 In short, 'twas his fate, unemployed or in place, Sir,  
 To eat mutton cold, and cut blocks with a razor.

(From Boswell's *Life of Johnson* ; published 1791.)

NOR would he [Goldsmith] patiently allow me to enlarge on Johnson's wonderful abilities ; but exclaimed, ' Is he like Burke, who winds into a subject like a serpent ? ' (May 9, 1773.)

*By Wordsworth*

(From *The Prelude* (vii. 486 f.) ; written 1799-1805 ; published 1850.)

PASS we . . .

. . . to that great stage

Where senators, tongue-favoured men, perform,  
Admired and envied. Oh ! the beating heart,  
When one among the prime of these rose up,—  
One of whose name from childhood we had heard  
Familiarly, a household term, like those,  
The Bedfords, Glosters, Salisburys, of old  
Whom the fifth Harry talks of. Silence ! hush !  
This is no trifler, no short-flighted wit,  
No stammerer of a minute, painfully  
Delivered. No ! the Orator hath yoked  
The hours, like young Aurora, to his car :  
Thrice welcome Presence ! how can patience ere  
Grow weary of attending on a track  
That kindles with such glory ! All are charmed,  
Astonished ; like a hero in romance  
He winds away his never-ending horn ;  
Words follow words, sense seems to follow sense :  
What memory and what logic ! till the strain,  
Transcendent, superhuman as it seemed,  
Grows tedious even in a young man's ear.

10

20

Genius of Burke ! forgive the pen reduced  
By specious wonders, and too slow to tell  
Of what the ingenuous, what bewildered men,  
Beginning to mistrust their boastful guides,  
And wise men, willing to grow wiser, caught,  
Rapt auditors ! from thy most eloquent tongue—  
Now mute, for ever mute in the cold grave.

I see him,—old, but vigorous in age,—  
Stand like an oak whose stag-horn branches start  
Out of its leafy brow, the more to awe  
The younger brethren of the grove. But some—  
While he forewarns, denounces, launches forth,  
Against all systems built on abstract rights,  
Keen ridicule; the majesty proclaims  
Of Institutes and Laws, hallowed by time;  
Declares the vital power of social ties  
10 Endeared by custom; and with high disdain,  
Exploding against Theory, insists  
Upon the allegiance to which men are born—  
Some—say at once a froward multitude—  
Murmur (for truth is hated, where not loved)  
As the winds fret within the Aeolian cave,  
Galled by their monarch's chain. The times were big  
With ominous change, which, night by night, provoked  
Keen struggles, and black clouds of passion raised;  
But memorable moments intervened,  
20 When Wisdom, like the Goddess from Jove's brain,  
Broke forth in armour of resplendent words,  
Startling the Synod. Could a youth, and one  
In ancient story versed, whose breast had heaved  
Under the weight of classic eloquence,  
Sit, see, and hear, unthankful, uninspired?

**Selections from  
BURKE**

## EARLY PHILOSOPHICAL TREATISES

### *The Servitude of the Poor*

(From *A Vindication of Natural Society* ; published 1756.)

BEFORE we finish our examination of artificial society, I shall lead your Lordship into a closer consideration of the relations which it gives birth to, and the benefits, if such they are, which result from these relations. The most obvious division of society is into rich and poor ; and it is no less obvious, that the numbers of the former bear a great disproportion to those of the latter. The whole business of the poor is to administer to the idleness, folly, and luxury of the rich ; and that of the rich, in <sup>10</sup> return, is to find the best methods of confirming the slavery and increasing the burdens of the poor. In a state of nature, it is an invariable law that a man's acquisitions are in proportion to his labours. In a state of artificial society, it is a law as constant and as invariable that those who labour most enjoy the fewest things ; and that those who labour not at all have the greatest number of enjoyments. A constitution of things this, strange and ridiculous beyond expression ! We scarce believe a thing when we are told it, which we actually see before our eyes every <sup>20</sup> day without being in the least surprised. I suppose that there are in Great Britain upwards of an hundred thousand people employed in lead, tin, iron, copper, and coal mines. These unhappy wretches scarce ever see the light of the sun ; they are buried in the bowels of the earth ; there they work at a severe and dismal task, without the least prospect of being delivered from it ; they subsist upon the coarsest and worst sort of fare ; they have their health miserably impaired, and their lives cut short, by being

perpetually confined in the close vapour of these malignant minerals. An hundred thousand more at least are tortured without remission by the suffocating smoke, intense fires, and constant drudgery necessary in refining and managing the products of those mines. If any man informed us that two hundred thousand innocent persons were condemned to so intolerable slavery, how should we pity the unhappy sufferers, and how great would be our just indignation against those who inflicted so cruel and ignominious a punishment! This is an instance, I could not wish <sup>10</sup> a stronger, of the numberless things which we pass by in their common dress, yet which shock us when they are nakedly represented. But this number, considerable as it is, and the slavery, with all its baseness and horror, which we have at home, is nothing to what the rest of the world affords of the same nature. Millions daily bathed in the poisonous damps and destructive effluvia of lead, silver, copper, and arsenic. To say nothing of those other employments, those stations of wretchedness and contempt, in which civil society has placed the numerous *enfans perdus* <sup>20</sup> of her army. Would any rational man submit to one of the most tolerable of these drudgeries for all the artificial enjoyments which policy has made to result from them? By no means. And yet need I suggest to your Lordship that those who find the means, and those who arrive at the end are not at all the same persons. On considering the strange and unaccountable fancies and contrivances of artificial reason, I have somewhere called this earth the Bedlam of our system. Looking now upon the effects of some of those fancies, may we not with equal reason call <sup>30</sup> it likewise the Newgate and the Bridewell of the universe? Indeed the blindness of one part of mankind, co-operating with the phrensy and villany of the other, has been the real builder of this respectable fabric of political society: and as the blindness of mankind has caused their slavery,

in return their state of slavery is made a pretence for continuing them in a state of blindness ; for the politician will tell you gravely that their life of servitude disqualifies the greater part of the race of man for a search of truth, and supplies them with no other than mean and insufficient ideas. This is but too true ; and this is one of the reasons for which I blame such institutions.

*Difference of the Sublime and Beautiful*

(From *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* ; published 1756.)

ON closing this general view of beauty, it naturally occurs that we should compare it with the sublime ; and in this comparison there appears a remarkable contrast. For sublime objects are vast in their dimensions, beautiful ones comparatively small : beauty should be smooth and polished ; the great, rugged and negligent : beauty should shun the right line, yet deviate from it insensibly ; the great in many cases loves the right line, and when it deviates it often makes a strong deviation : beauty should not be obscure ; the great ought to be dark and gloomy : beauty should be light and delicate ; the great ought to be solid, and even massive. They are indeed ideas of a very different nature, one being founded on pain, the other on pleasure ; and however they may vary afterwards from the direct nature of their causes, yet these causes keep up an eternal distinction between them, a distinction never to be forgotten by any whose business it is to affect the passions. In the infinite variety of natural combinations, we must expect to find the qualities of things the most remote imaginable from each other united in the same object. We must expect also to find combinations of the same kind in the works of art. But when we consider the power of an object upon our passions, we must know that when anything is intended to affect the mind by the

force of some predominant property, the affection produced is like to be the more uniform and perfect if all the other properties or qualities of the object be of the same nature, and tending to the same design, as the principal.

If black and white blend, soften, and unite

A thousand ways, are there no black and white ?

If the qualities of the sublime and beautiful are sometimes found united, does this prove that they are the same ; does it prove that they are any way allied ; does it prove even that they are not opposite and contradictory ? 10 Black and white may soften, may blend ; but they are not therefore the same. Nor, when they are so softened and blended with each other, or with different colours, is the power of black as black, or of white as white, so strong as when each stands uniform and distinguished.

*The Proper Effect of Poetry not Pictorial*

(From the same.)

So little does poetry depend for its effect on the power of raising sensible images that I am convinced it would lose a very considerable part of its energy if this were the necessary result of all description. Because that union of affecting words, which is the most powerful of all 20 poetical instruments, would frequently lose its force, along with its propriety and consistency, if the sensible images were always excited. There is not perhaps in the whole Aeneid a more grand and laboured passage than the description of Vulcan's cavern in Etna, and the works that are there carried on. Virgil dwells particularly on the formation of the thunder, which he describes unfinished under the hammers of the Cyclops. But what are the principles of this extraordinary composition ?

*Tres imbris torti radios, tres nubis aquosae*

*Addiderant; rutili tres ignis, et alitis austri:*

*Fulgores nunc terrificos, sonitumque, metumque*

*Miscebant operi, flammisque sequacibus iras.*

This seems to me admirably sublime ; yet if we attend coolly to the kind of sensible images which a combination of ideas of this sort must form, the chimeras of madmen cannot appear more wild and absurd than such a picture.

*'Three rays of twisted showers, three of watery clouds, three of fire, and three of the winged south wind ; then mixed they in the work terrific lightnings, and sound, and fear, and anger, with pursuing flames.'* This strange composition is formed into a gross body ; it is hammered by the Cyclops, 10 it is in part polished, and partly continues rough. The truth is, if poetry gives us a noble assemblage of words corresponding to many noble ideas which are connected by circumstances of time or place, or related to each other as cause and effect, or associated in any natural way, they may be moulded together in any form, and perfectly answer their end. The picturesque connexion is not demanded ; because no real picture is formed ; nor is the effect of the description at all the less upon this account. What is said of Helen by Priam and the old men of his 20 council, is generally thought to give us the highest possible idea of that fatal beauty.

Οὐ νέμεσις Τρῶας καὶ ἔυκνήμιδας Ἀχαιοὺς  
Τοιῆδ' ἀμφὶ γυναικὶ πολὺν χρόνον ἀλγεα πάσχειν.  
Αἰνῶς δὲ ἀθανάτησι θεῆς εἰς ὥπα ἔοικεν.

They cried, No wonder such celestial charms  
For nine long years have set the world in arms ;  
What winning graces ! what majestic mien !  
She moves a goddess, and she looks a queen. POPE.

Here is not one word said of the particulars of her beauty ; 30 nothing which can in the least help us to any precise idea of her person ; but yet we are much more touched by this manner of mentioning her than by those long and laboured descriptions of Helen, whether handed down by tradition, or formed by fancy, which are to be met with in some authors. I am sure it affects me much more than

the minute description which Spenser has given of Belphœbe; though I own that there are parts in that description, as there are in all the descriptions of that excellent writer, extremely fine and poetical. The terrible picture which Lucretius has drawn of religion, in order to display the magnanimity of his philosophical hero in opposing her, is thought to be designed with great boldness and spirit.

*Humana ante oculos foedè cum vita iaceret,  
In terris, oppressa gravi sub religione,  
Quae caput e coeli regionibus ostendebat  
Horribili super aspectu mortalibus instans,  
Primus Graius homo mortales tollere contra  
Est oculos ausus.—*

10

What idea do you derive from so excellent a picture? None at all, most certainly: neither has the poet said a single word which might in the least serve to mark a single limb or feature of the phantom, which he intended to represent in all the horrors imagination can conceive. In reality, poetry and rhetoric do not succeed in exact <sup>20</sup> description so well as painting does; their business is to affect rather by sympathy than imitation; to display rather the effect of things on the mind of the speaker, or of others, than to present a clear idea of the things themselves. This is their most extensive province, and that in which they succeed the best.

## HOME AFFAIRS

*Government and the Temper of the People*

(From *Thoughts on the Cause of the Present Discontents*, 1770.)

IN cases of tumult and disorder our law has invested every man, in some sort, with the authority of a magistrate. When the affairs of the nation are distracted,

private people are, by the spirit of that law, justified in stepping a little out of their ordinary sphere. They enjoy a privilege of somewhat more dignity and effect than that of idle lamentation over the calamities of their country. They may look into them narrowly ; they may reason upon them liberally ; and if they should be so fortunate as to discover the true source of the mischief, and to suggest any probable method of removing it, though they may displease the rulers for the day, they are certainly of 10 service to the cause of government. Government is deeply interested in every thing which, even through the medium of some temporary uneasiness, may tend finally to compose the minds of the subject and to conciliate their affections. I have nothing to do here with the abstract value of the voice of the people. But as long as reputation, the most precious possession of every individual, and as long as opinion, the great support of the state, depend entirely upon that voice, it can never be considered as 20 a thing of little consequence either to individuals or to governments. Nations are not primarily ruled by laws ; less by violence. Whatever original energy may be supposed either in force or regulation, the operation of both is, in truth, merely instrumental. Nations are governed by the same methods, and on the same principles, by which an individual without authority is often able to govern those who are his equals or his superiors ; by a knowledge of their temper, and by a judicious management of it. . . .

Nobody, I believe, will consider it merely as the 30 language of spleen or disappointment if I say that there is something particularly alarming in the present conjuncture. There is hardly a man, in or out of power, who holds any other language. That government is at once dreaded and contemned ; that the laws are despoiled of all their respected and salutary terrors ; that their inaction

is a subject of ridicule, and their exertion of abhorrence ; that rank, and office, and title, and all the solemn plausibilities of the world, have lost their reverence and effect ; that our foreign politics are as much deranged as our domestic economy ; that our dependencies are slackened in their affection, and loosened from their obedience ; that we know neither how to yield nor how to enforce ; that hardly anything above or below, abroad or at home, is sound and entire ; but that disconnection and confusion, in offices, in parties, in families, in parliament, in the nation, prevail beyond the disorders of any former time : these are facts universally admitted and lamented. . . .

I am not one of those who think that the people are never in the wrong. They have been so, frequently and outrageously, both in other countries and in this. But I do say that in all disputes between them and their rulers the presumption is at least upon a par in favour of the people. Experience may perhaps justify me in going farther. When popular discontents have been very prevalent, it may well be affirmed and supported that there has been generally something found amiss in the constitution, or in the conduct of government. The people have no interest in disorder. When they do wrong, it is their error, and not their crime. But with the governing part of the state it is far otherwise. They certainly may act ill by design, as well as by mistake. '*Les révoltes qui arrivent dans les grands états ne sont point un effet du hasard, ni du caprice des peuples. Rien ne révolte les grands d'un royaume comme un gouvernement foible et dérangé. Pour la populace, ce n'est jamais par envie d'attaquer qu'elle se soulève, mais par impatience de souffrir.*'<sup>1</sup> These are the words of a great man ; of a minister of state ; and a zealous assertor of monarchy. They are applied to the system of favoritism which was adopted by Henry III of

<sup>1</sup> *Mém. de Sully*, tom. i. p. 133.

France, and to the dreadful consequences it produced. What he says of revolutions is equally true of all great disturbances. If this presumption in favour of the subjects against the trustees of power be not the more probable, I am sure it is the more comfortable speculation ; because it is more easy to change an administration, than to reform a people.

*The System of Government by the Court*  
(From the same.)

IT is the nature of despotism to abhor power held by any means but its own momentary pleasure ; and to ~~10~~ annihilate all intermediate situations between boundless strength on its own part, and total debility on the part of the people.

To get rid of all this intermediate and independent importance, and to secure to the court the unlimited and uncontrolled use of its own vast influence, under the sole direction of its own private favour, has for some years past been the great object of policy. If this were compassed, the influence of the crown must of course produce all the effects which the most sanguine partisans of the court ~~20~~ could possibly desire. Government might then be carried on without any concurrence on the part of the people ; without any attention to the dignity of the greater or to the affections of the lower sorts. A new project was therefore devised by a certain set of intriguing men, totally different from the system of administration which had prevailed since the accession of the House of Brunswick. This project, I have heard, was first conceived by some persons in the court of Frederick, Prince of Wales. . . .

The first part of the reformed plan was to draw a line ~~30~~ which should separate the court from the ministry. Hitherto these names had been looked upon as synonymous ; but for the future, court and administration were to be con-

sidered as things totally distinct. By this operation two systems of administration were to be formed ; one which should be in the real secret and confidence ; the other merely ostensible, to perform the official and executory duties of government. The latter were alone to be responsible ; whilst the real advisers, who enjoyed all the power, were effectually removed from all the danger.

Secondly, *A party under these leaders was to be formed in favour of the court against the ministry* : this party was to have a large share in the emoluments of government, <sup>10</sup> and to hold it totally separate from, and independent of, ostensible administration.

The third point, and that on which the success of the whole scheme ultimately depended, was *to bring parliament to an acquiescence in this project*. Parliament was therefore to be taught by degrees a total indifference to the persons, rank, influence, abilities, connexions, and character of the ministers of the crown. By means of a discipline, on which I shall say more hereafter, that body was to be habituated to the most opposite interests and the most <sup>20</sup> discordant politics. All connexions and dependencies among subjects were to be entirely dissolved. . . .

To recommend this system to the people, a perspective view of the court, gorgeously painted, and finely illuminated from within, was exhibited to the gaping multitude. Party was to be totally done away, with all its evil works. Corruption was to be cast down from court, as *Atē* was from heaven. Power was thenceforward to be the chosen residence of public spirit ; and no one was to be supposed under any sinister influence, except those who had the <sup>30</sup> misfortune to be in disgrace at court, which was to stand in lieu of all vices and all corruptions ; a scheme of perfection to be realized in a monarchy far beyond the visionary republic of Plato. The whole scenery was exactly disposed to captivate those good souls, whose credulous morality is

so invaluable a treasure to crafty politicians. Indeed there was wherewithal to charm everybody, except those few who are not much pleased with professions of supernatural virtue, who know of what stuff such professions are made, for what purposes they are designed, and in what they are sure constantly to end. Many innocent gentlemen, who had been talking prose all their lives without knowing anything of the matter, began at last to open their eyes upon their own merits, and to attribute their not having 10 been lords of the treasury and lords of trade many years before merely to the prevalence of party and to the ministerial power, which had frustrated the good intentions of the court in favour of their abilities. Now was the time to unlock the sealed fountain of royal bounty, which had been infamously monopolized and huckstered, and to let it flow at large upon the whole people. The time was come to restore royalty to its original splendour. *Mettre le Roy hors de page*, became a sort of watchword. And it was constantly in the mouths of all the runners of the court 20 that nothing could preserve the balance of the constitution from being overturned by the rabble, or by a faction of the nobility, but to free the sovereign effectually from that ministerial tyranny under which the royal dignity had been oppressed in the person of his majesty's grandfather.

### *The Perversion of the House of Commons*

(From the same.)

PARLIAMENT was indeed the great object of all these politics, the end at which they aimed, as well as the instrument by which they were to operate. But, before parliament could be made subservient to a system by which it was to be degraded from the dignity of a national 30 council into a mere member of the court, it must be greatly changed from its original character.

In speaking of this body, I have my eye chiefly on the House of Commons. I hope I shall be indulged in a few observations on the nature and character of that assembly ; not with regard to its *legal form and power*, but to its *spirit*, and to the purposes it is meant to answer in the constitution.

The House of Commons was supposed originally to be *no part of the standing government of this country*. It was considered as a *control*, issuing *immediately* from the people, and speedily to be resolved into the mass from whence it <sup>10</sup> arose. In this respect it was in the higher part of government what juries are in the lower. The capacity of a magistrate being transitory, and that of a citizen permanent, the latter capacity it was hoped would of course preponderate in all discussions, not only between the people and the standing authority of the crown, but between the people and the fleeting authority of the House of Commons itself. It was hoped that, being of a middle nature between subject and government, they would feel with a more tender and a nearer interest every- <sup>20</sup> thing that concerned the people than the other remoter and more permanent parts of legislature.

Whatever alterations time and the necessary accommodation of business may have introduced, this character can never be sustained, unless the House of Commons shall be made to bear some stamp of the actual disposition of the people at large. It would (among public misfortunes) be an evil more natural and tolerable that the House of Commons should be infected with every epidemical frenzy of the people, as this would indicate some consanguinity, <sup>30</sup> some sympathy of nature with their constituents, than that they should in all cases be wholly untouched by the opinions and feelings of the people out of doors. By this want of sympathy they would cease to be a House of Commons. For it is not the derivation of the power of

that House from the people which makes it in a distinct sense their representative. The king is the representative of the people ; so are the lords ; so are the judges. They all are trustees for the people, as well as the commons ; because no power is given for the sole sake of the holder ; and although government certainly is an institution of divine authority, yet its forms, and the persons who administer it, all originate from the people.

A popular origin cannot therefore be the characteristical distinction of a popular representative. This belongs equally to all parts of government, and in all forms. The virtue, spirit, and essence of a House of Commons consists in its being the express image of the feelings of the nation. It was not instituted to be a control *upon* the people, as of late it has been taught, by a doctrine of the most pernicious tendency. It was designed as a control *for* the people. Other institutions have been formed for the purpose of checking popular excesses ; and they are, I apprehend, fully adequate to their object. If not, they ought to be made so. The House of Commons, as it was never intended for the support of peace and subordination, is miserably appointed for that service ; having no stronger weapon than its mace, and no better officer than its serjeant-at-arms, which it can command of its own proper authority. A vigilant and jealous eye over executory and judicial magistracy ; an anxious care of public money ; an openness, approaching towards facility, to public complaint : these seem to be the true characteristics of a House of Commons. But an addressing House of Commons, and a petitioning nation ; a House of Commons full of confidence, when the nation is plunged in despair ; in the utmost harmony with ministers, whom the people regard with the utmost abhorrence ; who vote thanks, when the public opinion calls upon them for impeachments ; who are eager to grant, when the general voice demands account ;

who, in all disputes between the people and administration, presume against the people ; who punish their disorders, but refuse even to inquire into the provocations to them ; this is an unnatural, a monstrous state of things in this constitution. Such an assembly may be a great, wise, awful senate ; but it is not, to any popular purpose, a House of Commons.

### *The Tameness of the Peers*

(From the same.)

I AM no friend to aristocracy, in the sense at least in which that word is usually understood. If it were not a bad habit to moot cases on the supposed ruin of the <sup>10</sup> constitution, I should be free to declare that, if it must perish, I would rather by far see it resolved into any other form than lost in that austere and insolent domination. But, whatever my dislikes may be, my fears are not upon that quarter. The question on the influence of a court, and of a peerage, is not, which of the two dangers is the more eligible, but which is the more imminent. He is but a poor observer who has not seen that the generality of peers, far from supporting themselves in a state of independent greatness, are but too apt to fall into an oblivion <sup>20</sup> of their proper dignity, and to run headlong into an abject servitude. Would to God it were true that the fault of our peers were too much spirit !

### *The Practicable Remedies*

(From the same.)

THAT man who before he comes into power has no friends, or who coming into power is obliged to desert his friends, or who losing it has no friends to sympathize with him ; he who has no sway among any part of the landed or commercial interest, but whose whole importance

has begun with his office, and is sure to end with it; is a person who ought never to be suffered by a controlling parliament to continue in any of those situations which confer the lead and direction of all our public affairs; because such a man *has no connexion with the interest of the people.*

Those knots or cabals of men who have got together, avowedly without any public principle, in order to sell their conjunct iniquity at the higher rate, and are therefore ~~10~~ universally odious, ought never to be suffered to domineer in the state; because they have *no connexion with the sentiments and opinions of the people.*

These are considerations which in my opinion enforce the necessity of having some better reason, in a free country—and a free parliament, for supporting the ministers of the crown than that short one, *That the king has thought proper to appoint them.* There is something very courtly in this. But it is a principle pregnant with all sorts of mischief, in a constitution like ours, to turn the ~~20~~ views of active men from the country to the court. Whatever be the road to power, that is the road which will be trod. If the opinion of the country be of no use as a means of power or consideration, the qualities which usually procure that opinion will be no longer cultivated. And whether it will be right, in a state so popular in its constitution as ours, to leave ambition without popular motives, and to trust all to the operation of pure virtue in the minds of kings, and ministers, and public men, must be submitted to the judgement and good sense of the people ~~30~~ of England. . . .

It is not more the duty than it is the interest of a prince to aim at giving tranquillity to his government. But those who advise him may have an interest in disorder and confusion. If the opinion of the people is against them, they will naturally wish that it should have no

prevalence. Here it is that the people must on their part show themselves sensible of their own value. Their whole importance, in the first instance, and afterwards their whole freedom, is at stake. Their freedom cannot long survive their importance. Here it is that the natural strength of the kingdom, the great peers, the leading landed gentlemen, the opulent merchants and manufacturers, the substantial yeomanry, must interpose, to rescue their prince, themselves, and their posterity. . . .

In the situation in which we stand, with an immense <sup>10</sup> revenue, an enormous debt, mighty establishments, government itself a great banker and a great merchant, I see no other way for the preservation of a decent attention to public interest in the representatives but *the interposition of the body of the people itself*, whenever it shall appear, by some flagrant and notorious act, by some capital innovation, that these representatives are going to overleap the fences of the law, and to introduce an arbitrary power. This interposition is a most unpleasant remedy. But, if it be a legal remedy, it is intended on some occasion to be <sup>20</sup> used ; to be used then only, when it is evident that nothing else can hold the constitution to its true principles.

The distempers of monarchy were the great subjects of apprehension and redress in the last century ; in this, the distempers of parliament. It is not in parliament alone that the remedy for parliamentary disorders can be completed ; hardly indeed can it begin there. Until a confidence in government is re-established, the people ought to be excited to a more strict and detailed attention to the conduct of their representatives. Standards for <sup>30</sup> judging more systematically upon their conduct ought to be settled in the meetings of counties and corporations. Frequent and correct lists of the voters in all important questions ought to be procured.

By such means something may be done. By such means

it may appear who those are that, by an indiscriminate support of all administrations, have totally banished all integrity and confidence out of public proceedings ; have confounded the best men with the worst ; and weakened and dissolved, instead of strengthening and compacting, the general frame of government.

### *A Defence of Party*

(From the same.)

THIS cabal has, with great success, propagated a doctrine which serves for a colour to those acts of treachery ; and whilst it receives any degree of countenance, it will be ~~10~~ utterly senseless to look for a vigorous opposition to the court party. The doctrine is this : That all political connexions are in their nature factious, and as such ought to be dissipated and destroyed ; and that the rule for forming administrations is mere personal ability, rated by the judgement of this cabal upon it, and taken by draughts from every division and denomination of public men. This decree was solemnly promulgated by the head of the court corps, the Earl of Bute himself, in a speech which he made, in the year 1766, against the then administration, ~~20~~ the only administration which he has ever been known directly and publicly to oppose.

It is indeed no way wonderful that such persons should make such declarations. That connexion and faction are equivalent terms is an opinion which has been carefully inculcated at all times by unconstitutional statesmen. The reason is evident. Whilst men are linked together, they easily and speedily communicate the alarm of any evil design. They are enabled to fathom it with common counsel, and to oppose it with united strength. Whereas, ~~30~~ when they lie dispersed, without concert, order, or discipline, communication is uncertain, counsel difficult,

and resistance impracticable. Where men are not acquainted with each other's principles, nor experienced in each other's talents, nor at all practised in their mutual habitudes and dispositions by joint efforts in business ; no personal confidence, no friendship, no common interest, subsisting among them ; it is evidently impossible that they can act a public part with uniformity, perseverance, or efficacy. In a connexion, the most inconsiderable man, by adding to the weight of the whole, has his value, and his use ; out of it, the greatest talents are wholly unservice-<sup>10</sup> able to the public. No man, who is not inflamed by vain-glory into enthusiasm, can flatter himself that his single, unsupported, desultory, unsystematic endeavours are of power to defeat the subtle designs and united cabals of ambitious citizens. When bad men combine, the good must associate ; else they will fall, one by one, an unpitied sacrifice in a contemptible struggle. . . .

In order to throw an odium on political connexion, these politicians suppose it a necessary incident to it that you are blindly to follow the opinions of your party, <sup>20</sup> when in direct opposition to your own clear ideas ; a degree of servitude that no worthy man could bear the thought of submitting to ; and such as, I believe, no connexions (except some court factions) ever could be so senselessly tyrannical as to impose. Men thinking freely will, in particular instances, think differently. But still, as the greater part of the measures which arise in the course of public business are related to, or dependent on, some great, *leading general principles in government*, a man must be peculiarly unfortunate in the choice of his political <sup>30</sup> company, if he does not agree with them at least nine times in ten. If he does not concur in these general principles upon which the party is founded, and which necessarily draw on a concurrence in their application, he ought from the beginning to have chosen some other, more conformable

to his opinions. When the question is in its nature doubtful, or not very material, the modesty which becomes an individual, and (in spite of our court moralists) that partiality which becomes a well-chosen friendship, will frequently bring on an acquiescence in the general sentiment. Thus the disagreement will naturally be rare ; it will be only enough to indulge freedom, without violating concord, or disturbing arrangement. And this is all that ever was required for a character of the greatest uniformity 10 and steadiness in connexion. How men can proceed without any connexion at all, is to me utterly incomprehensible. Of what sort of materials must that man be made, how must he be tempered and put together, who can sit whole years in parliament, with five hundred and fifty of his fellow-citizens, amidst the storm of such tempestuous passions, in the sharp conflict of so many wits and tempers and characters, in the agitation of such mighty questions, in the discussion of such vast and ponderous interests, without seeing any one sort of men whose 20 character, conduct, or disposition, would lead him to associate himself with them, to aid and be aided, in any one system of public utility ?

I remember an old scholastic aphorism which says, 'that the man who lives wholly detached from others must be either an angel or a devil.' When I see in any of these detached gentlemen of our times the angelic purity, power, and beneficence, I shall admit them to be angels. In the meantime we are born only to be men. We shall do enough if we form ourselves to be good ones. 30 It is therefore our business carefully to cultivate in our minds, to rear to the most perfect vigour and maturity, every sort of generous and honest feeling that belongs to our nature. To bring the dispositions that are lovely in private life into the service and conduct of the commonwealth ; so to be patriots, as not to forget we are gentlemen.

To cultivate friendships, and to incur enmities. To have both strong, but both selected ; in the one to be placable ; in the other immovable. To model our principles to our duties and our situation. To be fully persuaded that all virtue which is impracticable is spurious ; and rather to run the risk of falling into faults in a course which leads us to act with effect and energy, than to loiter out our days without blame and without use. Public life is a situation of power and energy ; he trespasses against his duty who sleeps upon his watch, as well as he that goes <sup>10</sup> over to the enemy.

### *Parliamentary Reform*

(From *Observations on a Publication entitled 'The Present State of the Nation'*, 1769.)

I SEE nothing in them [i.e. the proposals of an extended franchise] but what is usual with the author ; an attempt to raise discontent in the people of England, to balance those discontents the measures of his friends had already raised in America. What other reason can he have for suggesting, that we are not happy enough to enjoy a sufficient number of voters in England ? I believe that most sober thinkers on this subject are rather of opinion that our fault is on the other side ; and that it would be more <sup>20</sup> in the spirit of our constitution, and more agreeable to the pattern of our best laws, by lessening the number, to add to the weight and independency of our voters. And truly, considering the immense and dangerous charge of elections, the prostitute and daring venality, the corruption of manners, the idleness and profligacy of the lower sort of voters, no prudent man would propose to increase such an evil, if it be, as I fear it is, out of our power to administer to it any remedy.

(From the Speech in the House of Commons, May 7, 1782.)

THE House of Commons . . . undoubtedly is no representative of the people, as a collection of individuals. Nobody pretends it, nobody can justify such an assertion. When you come to examine into this claim of right, founded on the right of self-government in each individual, you find the thing demanded infinitively short of the principle of the demand. What ! *one-third* only of the legislature, and of the government no share at all ? What sort of treaty of partition is this for those who have an inherent <sup>10</sup> right to the whole ? Give them all they ask, and your grant is still a cheat ; for how comes only a third to be their younger children's fortune in this settlement ? How came they neither to have the choice of kings, or lords, or judges, or generals, or admirals, or bishops, or priests, or ministers, or justices of peace ? Why, what have you to answer in favour of the prior rights of the crown and peerage but this—our constitution is a prescriptive constitution ; it is a constitution whose sole authority is that it has existed time out of mind. It is <sup>20</sup> settled in these *two* portions against one, legislatively ; and in the whole of the judicature, the whole of the federal capacity, of the executive, the prudential and the financial administration, in one alone. Nor was your House of Lords and the prerogatives of the crown settled on any adjudication in favour of natural rights, for they could never be so partitioned. Your king, your lords, your judges, your juries grand and little, are all prescriptive ; and what proves it is, the disputes not yet concluded, and never near becoming so, when any of them first originated. Prescription is the <sup>30</sup> most solid of all titles, not only to property, but, which is to secure that property, to government. They harmonize with each other, and give mutual aid to one another. It is accompanied with another ground of authority in the constitution of the human mind, presumption. It is

a presumption in favour of any settled scheme of government against any untried project that a nation has long existed and flourished under it. It is a better presumption even of the *choice* of a nation, far better than any sudden and temporary arrangement by actual election. Because a nation is not an idea only of local extent and individual momentary aggregation, but it is an idea of continuity which extends in time as well as in numbers and in space. And this is a choice not of one day, or one set of people, not a tumultary and giddy choice ; it is 10 a deliberate election of ages and of generations ; it is a constitution made by what is ten thousand times better than choice, it is made by the peculiar circumstances, occasions, tempers, dispositions, and moral, civil, and social habitudes of the people, which disclose themselves only in a long space of time. It is a vestment which accommodates itself to the body. Nor is prescription of government formed upon blind unmeaning prejudices— for man is a most unwise and a most wise being. The individual is foolish. The multitude, for the moment, is 20 foolish when they act without deliberation ; but the species is wise, and when time is given to it, as a species, it almost always acts right. . . .

It suggests melancholy reflections, in consequence of the strange course we have long held, that we are now no longer quarrelling about the character, or about the conduct of men, or the tenor of measures ; but we are grown out of humour with the English constitution itself ; this is become the object of the animosity of Englishmen. This constitution in former days used to be the admiration 30 and the envy of the world ; it was the pattern of politicians ; the theme of the eloquent ; the meditation of the philosopher in every part of the world. As to Englishmen, it was their pride, their consolation. By it they lived, for it they were ready to die. Its defects, if it had any, were

partly covered by partiality, and partly borne by prudence. Now all its excellences are forgot, its faults are now forcibly dragged into day, exaggerated by every artifice of representation. It is despised and rejected of men ; and every device and invention of ingenuity, or idleness, set up in opposition or in preference to it. It is to this humour, and it is to the measures growing out of it, that I set myself (I hope not alone) in the most determined opposition. Never before did we at any time in this country <sup>10</sup> meet upon the theory of our frame of government, to sit in judgement on the constitution of our country, to call it as a delinquent before us, and to accuse it of every defect and every vice ; to see whether it, an object of our veneration, even our adoration, did or did not accord with a pre-conceived scheme in the minds of certain gentlemen. Cast your eyes on the journals of parliament. It is for fear of losing the inestimable treasure we have that I do not venture to game it out of my hands for the vain hope of improving it. I look with filial reverence on the constitution <sup>20</sup> of my country, and never will cut it in pieces, and put it into the kettle of any magician, in order to boil it, with the puddle of their compounds, into youth and vigour. On the contrary, I will drive away such pretenders ; I will nurse its venerable age, and with lenient arts extend a parent's breath.

(From the Letter to Sir Hercules Langrishe, 1792.)

You separate very properly the sober, rational, and substantial part of their description [i.e. the Irish Catholics] from the rest. You give, as you ought to do, weight only to the former. What I have always thought of the matter <sup>30</sup> is this—that the most poor, illiterate, and uninformed creatures upon earth are judges of a *practical* oppression. It is a matter of feeling ; and as such persons generally have felt most of it, and are not of an over-lively sensibility,

they are the best judges of it. But for the *real cause*, or the *appropriate remedy*, they ought never to be called into council about the one or the other. They ought to be totally shut out ; because their reason is weak ; because, when once roused, their passions are ungoverned ; because they want information ; because the smallness of the property which individually they possess renders them less attentive to the consequence of the measures they adopt in affairs of moment. When I find a great cry amongst the people who speculate little, I think myself called seriously <sup>10</sup> to examine into it, and to separate the real cause from the ill effects of the passion it may excite, and the bad use which artful men may make of an irritation of the popular mind.

### *Members of Parliament and their Constituents*

(From the Speech at Bristol on being elected to Parliament for that city, November 1774.)

CERTAINLY, gentlemen, it ought to be the happiness and glory of a representative to live in the strictest union, the closest correspondence, and the most unreserved communication with his constituents. Their wishes ought to have great weight with him ; their opinion high respect ; their business unremitting attention. It is his duty to <sup>20</sup> sacrifice his repose, his pleasures, his satisfactions, to theirs ; and above all, ever, and in all cases, to prefer their interest to his own. But his unbiassed opinion, his mature judgement, his enlightened conscience, he ought not to sacrifice to you ; to any man, or to any set of men living. These he does not derive from your pleasure ; no, nor from the law and the constitution. They are a trust from Providence, for the abuse of which he is deeply answerable. Your representative owes you, not his industry only, but his judgement ; and he betrays, instead of serving you, if <sup>30</sup> he sacrifices it to your opinion

My worthy colleague says his will ought to be subservient to yours. If that be all, the thing is innocent. If government were a matter of will upon any side, yours, without question, ought to be superior. But government and legislation are matters of reason and judgement, and not of inclination ; and what sort of reason is that, in which the determination precedes the discussion ; in which one set of men deliberate, and another decide ; and where those who form the conclusion are perhaps three hundred miles <sup>10</sup> distant from those who hear the arguments ?

To deliver an opinion is the right of all men ; that of constituents is a weighty and respectable opinion, which a representative ought always to rejoice to hear ; and which he ought always most seriously to consider. But *authoritative* instructions, *mandates* issued, which the member is bound blindly and implicitly to obey, to vote, and to argue for, though contrary to the clearest conviction of his judgement and conscience,—these are things utterly unknown to the laws of this land, and which arise <sup>20</sup> from a fundamental mistake of the whole order and tenor of our constitution.

Parliament is not a *congress* of ambassadors from different and hostile interests ; which interests each must maintain, as an agent and advocate, against other agents and advocates ; but parliament is a *deliberative* assembly of *one* nation, with *one* interest, that of the whole ; where, not local purposes, not local prejudices ought to guide, but the general good, resulting from the general reason of the whole. You choose a member indeed ; but when <sup>30</sup> you have chosen him, he is not member of Bristol, but he is a member of *parliament*. If the local constituent should have an interest, or should form an hasty opinion, evidently opposite to the real good of the rest of the community, the member for that place ought to be as far, as any other, from any endeavour to give it effect. I beg pardon for

saying so much on this subject. I have been unwillingly drawn into it ; but I shall ever use a respectful frankness of communication with you. Your faithful friend, your devoted servant, I shall be to the end of my life : a flatterer you do not wish for. On this point of instructions, however, I think it scarcely possible we ever can have any sort of difference. Perhaps I may give you too much, rather than too little trouble.

### *The Province of Government*

(From *Thoughts and Details on Scarcity*, 1795.)

IT is one of the finest problems in legislation, and what has often engaged my thoughts whilst I followed that profession, 'what the state ought to take upon itself to direct by the public wisdom, and what it ought to leave, with as little interference as possible, to individual discretion'. Nothing, certainly, can be laid down on the subject that will not admit of exceptions, many permanent, some occasional. But the clearest line of distinction which I could draw whilst I had my chalk to draw any line, was this ; that the state ought to confine itself to what regards the state, or the creatures of the state, namely, the exterior establishment of its religion ; its magistracy ; its revenue ; its military force by sea and land ; the corporations that owe their existence to its fiat ; in a word, to everything that is *truly and properly* public, to the public peace, to the public safety, to the public order, to the public prosperity. In its preventive police it ought to be sparing in its efforts, and to employ means, rather few, unfrequent, and strong, than many and frequent, and, of course, as they multiply their puny politic race and dwindle, small and feeble. Statesmen who know themselves will, with the dignity which belongs to wisdom, proceed only in this the superior orb, and first mover of their duty steadily, vigi-

lantly, severely, courageously : whatever remains will, in a manner, provide for itself. But as they descend from the state to the province, from a province to a parish, and from a parish to a private house, they go on accelerated in their fall. They *cannot* do the lower duty ; and, in proportion as they try it, they will certainly fail in the higher. They ought to know the different departments of things ; what belongs to laws, and what manners alone can regulate. To these great politicians may give a leaning, but they <sup>10</sup> cannot give a law.

*Burke's Measures for Economical Reform ; their Moderation*

(From the Speech presenting the Bill, February 11, 1780.)

As it is the interest of government that reformation should be early, it is the interest of the people that it should be temperate. It is their interest, because a temperate reform is permanent ; and because it has a principle of growth. Whenever we improve, it is right to leave room for a further improvement. It is right to consider, to look about us, to examine the effect of what we have done. Then we can proceed with confidence, because we can proceed with intelligence. Whereas in hot reformations, <sup>20</sup> in what men, more zealous than considerate, call *making clear work*, the whole is generally so crude, so harsh, so indigested ; mixed with so much imprudence, and so much injustice ; so contrary to the whole course of human nature, and human institutions, that the very people who are most eager for it are among the first to grow disgusted at what they have done. Then some part of the abdicated grievance is recalled from its exile in order to become a corrective of the correction. Then the abuse assumes all the credit and popularity of a reform. The very idea of <sup>30</sup> purity and disinterestedness in politics falls into disrepute,

and is considered as a vision of hot and inexperienced men ; and thus disorders become incurable, not by the virulence of their own quality, but by the unapt and violent nature of the remedies. A great part, therefore, of my idea of reform is meant to operate gradually ; some benefits will come at a nearer, some at a more remote, period. We must no more make haste to be rich by parsimony, than by intemperate acquisition.

*Economical Reform : the Royal Household*

(From the same.)

BUT when the reason of old establishments is gone, it is absurd to preserve nothing but the burden of them. 10 This is superstitiously to embalm a carcass not worth an ounce of the gums that are used to preserve it. It is to burn precious oils in the tomb ; it is to offer meat and drink to the dead,—not so much an honour to the deceased as a disgrace to the survivors. Our palaces are vast inhospitable halls. There the bleak winds, there ' Boreas, and Eurus, and Caurus, and Argestes loud ', howling through the vacant lobbies, and clattering the doors of deserted guard-rooms, appal the imagination, and conjure up the grim spectres of departed tyrants—the Saxon, the 20 Norman, and the Dane ; the stern Edwards and fierce Henries—who stalk from desolation to desolation, through the dreary vacuity and melancholy succession of chill and comfortless chambers. When this tumult subsides, a dead, and still more frightful silence would reign in this desert, if every now and then the tacking of hammers did not announce that those constant attendants upon all courts in all ages, jobs, were still alive ; for whose sake alone it is that any trace of ancient grandeur is suffered to remain. These palaces are a true emblem of some governments ; the inhabitants are decayed, but the governors and magistrates still flourish. They put me in mind of 30

*Old Sarum*, where the representatives, more in number than the constituents, only serve to inform us that this was once a place of trade, and sounding with 'the busy hum of men', though now you can only trace the streets by the colour of the corn; and its sole manufacture is in members of parliament.

These old establishments were formed also on a third principle, still more adverse to the living economy of the age. They were formed, sir, on the principle of *purveyance* <sup>10</sup> and *receipt in kind*. In former days, when the household was vast, and the supply scanty and precarious, the royal purveyors, sallying forth from under the Gothic portcullis to purchase provision with power and prerogative instead of money, brought home the plunder of a hundred markets, and all that could be seized from a flying and hiding country, and deposited their spoil in a hundred caverns, with each its keeper. There, every commodity, received in its rawest condition, went through all the process which fitted it for use. This inconvenient receipt produced an <sup>20</sup> economy suited only to itself. It multiplied offices beyond all measure; buttery, pantry, and all that rabble of places which, though profitable to the holders and expensive to the state, are almost too mean to mention. . . .

If therefore we aim at regulating this household, the question will be, whether we ought to economize by *detail* or by *principle*? The example we have had of the success of an attempt to economize by detail, and under establishments adverse to the attempt, may tend to decide this question.

<sup>30</sup> At the beginning of his majesty's reign, Lord Talbot came to the administration of a great department in the household. I believe no man ever entered into his majesty's service, or into the service of any prince, with a more clear integrity, or with more zeal and affection for the interest of his master; and, I must add, with

abilities for a still higher service. Economy was then announced as a maxim of the reign. This noble lord therefore made several attempts towards a reform. In the year 1777, when the king's civil list debts came last to be paid, he explained very fully the success of his undertaking. He told the House of Lords, that he had attempted to reduce the charges of the king's tables, and his kitchen.—The thing, sir, was not below him. He knew that there is nothing interesting in the concerns of men whom we love and honour that is beneath our attention.—‘Love’, says 10 one of our old poets, ‘esteems no office mean’; and with still more spirit, ‘entire affection scorneth nicer hands’. Frugality, sir, is founded on the principle that all riches have limits. A royal household, grown enormous, even in the meanest departments, may weaken and perhaps destroy all energy in the highest offices of the state. The gorging a royal kitchen may stint and famish the negotiations of a kingdom. Therefore the object was worthy of his, was worthy of any man's attention.

In consequence of this noble lord's resolution (as he 20 told the other House), he reduced several tables, and put the persons entitled to them upon board wages, much to their own satisfaction. But unluckily subsequent duties requiring constant attendance, it was not possible to prevent their being fed where they were employed—and thus the first step towards economy doubled the expense.

There was another disaster far more doleful than this. I shall state it, as the cause of that misfortune lies at the bottom of almost all our prodigality. Lord Talbot attempted to reform the kitchen; but such, as he well 30 observed, is the consequence of having duty done by one person, whilst another enjoys the emoluments, that he found himself frustrated in all his designs. On that rock his whole adventure split—his whole scheme of economy was dashed to pieces; his department became more

expensive than ever ;—the civil list debt accumulated—Why? It was truly from a cause which, though perfectly adequate to the effect, one would not have instantly guessed ;—It was because the *turnspit in the king's kitchen was a member of parliament!*<sup>1</sup> The king's domestic servants were all undone ; his tradesmen remained unpaid and became bankrupt—*because the turnspit of the king's kitchen was a member of parliament.* His majesty's slumbers were interrupted, his pillow was stuffed with thorns, and to his peace of mind entirely broken—*because the king's turnspit was a member of parliament.* The judges were unpaid ; the justice of the kingdom bent and gave way ; the foreign ministers remained inactive and unprovided ; the system of Europe was dissolved ; the chain of our alliances was broken ; all the wheels of government at home and abroad were stopped—*because the king's turnspit was a member of parliament!*

*Offices Assigned as Pensions*  
(From the same.)

SIR, I shall be asked why I do not choose to destroy those offices which are pensions and appoint pensions under the direct title in their stead? I allow that in some cases it leads to abuse to have things appointed for one purpose and applied to another. I have no great objections to such a change : but I do not think it quite prudent for me to propose it. If I should take away the present establishment, the burden of proof rests upon me that so many pensions, and no more, and to such an amount each, and no more, are necessary for the public service. This is what I can never prove, for it is a thing incapable of definition. I do not like to take away an object that I think answers my purpose, in hopes of getting

<sup>1</sup> Vide Lord Talbot's speech in Almond's *Parliamentary Register*, vol. ii, p. 79, of the proceedings of the Lords.

it back again in a better shape. People will bear an old establishment, when its excess is corrected, who will revolt at a new one. I do not think these office-pensions to be more in number than sufficient: but on that point the House will exercise its discretion. As to abuse, I am convinced that very few trusts in the ordinary course of administration have admitted less abuse than this. Efficient ministers have been their own paymasters. It is true. But their very partiality has operated as a kind of justice; and still it was service that was paid. When we look over 10 this exchequer list, we find it filled with the descendants of the Walpoles, of the Pelhams, of the Townshends, names to whom this country owes its liberties, and to whom his majesty owes his crown. It was in one of these lines that the immense and envied employment he now holds came to a certain duke,<sup>1</sup> who is now probably sitting quietly at a very good dinner directly under us, and acting *high life below stairs*, whilst we, his masters, are filling our mouths with unsubstantial sound and talking of hungry economy over his head. But he is the elder branch of an 20 ancient and decayed house, joined to, and repaired by the reward of services done by another. I respect the original title and the first purchase of merited wealth and honour through all its descents, through all its transfers, and all its assignments. May such fountains never be dried up! May they ever flow with their original purity, and refresh and fructify the commonwealth for ages!

### *The Liberation of Irish Trade*

(From *Two Letters to Gentlemen in the City of Bristol, 1778.*)

Is it quite fair to suppose that I have no other motive for yielding to them, but a desire of acting *against* my constituents? It is for *you* and for *your* interest, as a dear, 30

<sup>1</sup> Duke of Newcastle, whose dining-room was under the House of Commons.

cherished, and respected part of a valuable whole, that I have taken my share in this question. You do not, you cannot suffer by it. If honesty be true policy with regard to the transient interest of individuals, it is much more certainly so with regard to the permanent interests of communities. I know that it is but too natural for us to see our own *certain* ruin in the *possible* prosperity of other people. It is hard to persuade us that everything which is *got* by another is not *taken* from ourselves. But it is fit that 10 we should get the better of these suggestions, which come from what is not the best and soundest part of our nature, and that we should form to ourselves a way of thinking more rational, more just, and more religious. Trade is not a limited thing ; as if the objects of mutual demand and consumption could not stretch beyond the bounds of our jealousies. God has given the earth to the children of men, and He has undoubtedly, in giving it to them, given them what is abundantly sufficient for all their exigencies ; not a scanty, but a most liberal provision for them all. 20 The Author of our nature has written it strongly in that nature, and has promulgated the same law in His written word, that man shall eat his bread by his labour ; and I am persuaded that no man, and no combination of men, for their own ideas of their particular profit, can, without great impiety, undertake to say that he *shall not* do so ; that they have no sort of right either to prevent the labour, or to withhold the bread. Ireland, having received no *compensation*, directly or indirectly, for any restraints on their trade, ought not, in justice or common honesty, to be 30 made subject to such restraints. I do not mean to impeach the right of the parliament of Great Britain to make laws for the trade of Ireland. I only speak of what laws it is right for parliament to make.

It is nothing to an oppressed people to say that in part they are protected at our charge. The military force which

shall be kept up in order to cramp the natural faculties of a people, and to prevent their arrival to their utmost prosperity, is the instrument of their servitude, not the means of their protection. To protect men is to forward, and not to restrain, their improvement. Else, what is it more than to avow to them, and to the world, that you guard them from others only to make them a prey to yourself ? This fundamental nature of protection does not belong to free, but to all governments ; and is as valid in Turkey as in Great Britain. No government ought to <sup>10</sup> own that it exists for the purpose of checking the prosperity of its people, or that there is such a principle involved in its policy. . . .

It is very unfortunate that we should consider those as rivals, whom we ought to regard as fellow-labourers in a common cause. Ireland has never made a single step in its progress towards prosperity by which you have not had a share, and perhaps the greatest share, in the benefit. That progress has been chiefly owing to her own natural advantages, and her own efforts, which, after a long time, <sup>20</sup> and by slow degrees, have prevailed in some measure over the mischievous systems which have been adopted. Far enough she is still from having arrived even at an ordinary state of perfection ; and if our jealousies were to be converted into politics as systematically as some would have them, the trade of Ireland would vanish out of the system of commerce. But believe me, if Ireland is beneficial to you, it is so not from the parts in which it is restrained, but from those in which it is left free, though not left unrivalled. The greater its freedom, the greater must be <sup>30</sup> your advantage. If you should lose in one way, you will gain in twenty.

*Catholic Emancipation in England*

(From the Speech at Bristol previous to the Election, 1780.)

BUT if I was unable to reconcile such a denial to the contracted principles of local duty, what answer could I give to the broad claims of general humanity ? I confess to you freely that the sufferings and distresses of the people of America in this cruel war have at times affected me more deeply than I can express. I felt every Gazette of triumph as a blow upon my heart, which has a hundred times sunk and fainted within me at all the mischiefs brought upon those who bear the whole brunt of war in 10 the heart of their country. Yet the Americans are utter strangers to me ; a nation among whom I am not sure that I have a single acquaintance. Was I to suffer my mind to be so unaccountably warped ; was I to keep such iniquitous weights and measures of temper and of reason, as to sympathize with those who are in open rebellion against an authority which I respect, at war with a country which by every title ought to be, and is most dear to me ; and yet to have no feeling at all for the hardships and indignities suffered by men who, by their very vicinity, 20 are bound up in a nearer relation to us ; who contribute their share, and more than their share, to common prosperity ; who perform the common offices of social life, and who obey the laws to the full as well as I do ? Gentlemen, the danger to the state being out of the question (of which, let me tell you, statesmen themselves are apt to have but too exquisite a sense), I could assign no one reason of justice, policy, or feeling, for not concurring most cordially, as most cordially I did concur, in softening some part of 30 that shameful servitude, under which several of my worthy fellow-citizens were groaning.

*Catholic Emancipation in Ireland*

(From the Letter to Sir Hercules Langrishe, 1792.)

THE whole being at discretion, I beg leave just to suggest some matters for your consideration—whether the government in church or state is likely to be more secure by continuing causes of grounded discontent to a very great number (say two millions) of the subjects. Or, whether the constitution, combined and balanced as it is, will be rendered more solid by depriving so large a part of the people of all concern, or interest, or share in its representation, actual or *virtual*. I here mean to lay an emphasis on the word *virtual*. Virtual representation is that in which 10 there is a communion of interests, and a sympathy in feelings and desires between those who act in the name of any description of people, and the people in whose name they act, though the trustees are not actually chosen by them. This is virtual representation. Such a representation I think to be, in many cases, even better than the actual. It possesses most of its advantages, and is free from many of its inconveniences ; it corrects the irregularities in the literal representation, when the shifting current of human affairs, or the acting of public interests in different ways, 20 carry it obliquely from its first line of direction. The people may err in their choice ; but common interest and common sentiment are rarely mistaken. But this sort of virtual representation cannot have a long or sure existence if it has not a substratum in the actual. The member must have some relation to the constituent. As things stand, the Catholic, as a Catholic, and belonging to a description, has no *virtual* relation to the representative ; but the 30 contrary. There is a relation in mutual obligation. Gratitude may not always have a very lasting power ; but the frequent recurrence of an application for favours will revive and refresh it, and will necessarily produce some

degrees of mutual attention. It will produce, at least, acquaintance. The several descriptions of people will not be kept so much apart as they now are, as if they were not only separate nations, but separate species. The stigma and reproach, the hideous mask will be taken off, and men will see each other as they are. Sure I am that there have been thousands in Ireland who have never conversed with a Roman Catholic in their whole lives, unless they happened to talk to their gardener's workmen, or to ask their way, <sup>10</sup> when they had lost it, in their sports ; or, at best, who had known them only as footmen, or other domestics of the second and third order : and so averse were they, some time ago, to have them near their persons, that they would not employ even those who could never find their way beyond the stable. I well remember a great, and in many respects a good man, who advertised for a blacksmith ; but, at the same time, added, he must be a Protestant. It is impossible that such a state of things, though natural goodness in many persons will undoubtedly make <sup>20</sup> exceptions, must not produce alienation on the one side, and pride and insolence on the other.

*On the Toleration of Dissenters*

(From the Speech for the Relief of Protestant Dissenters, 1773.)

AT the same time that I would cut up the very root of atheism, I would respect all conscience ; all conscience that is really such, and which perhaps its very tenderness proves to be sincere. I wish to see the established church of England great and powerful ; I wish to see her foundations laid low and deep, that she may crush the giant powers of rebellious darkness ; I would have her head raised up to that Heaven to which she conducts <sup>30</sup> us. I would have her open wide her hospitable gates by a noble and liberal comprehension. But I would have

no breaches in her wall. I would have her cherish all those who are within, and pity all those who are without ; I would have her a common blessing to the world, an example, if not an instructor to those who have not the happiness to belong to her ; I would have her give a lesson of peace to mankind, that a vexed and wandering generation might be taught to seek for repose and toleration in the maternal bosom of Christian charity, and not in the harlot lap of infidelity and indifference. Nothing has driven people more into that house of seduction than 10 the mutual hatred of Christian congregations. Long may we enjoy our church under a learned and edifying episcopacy. But episcopacy may fail, and religion exist. The most horrid and cruel blow that can be offered to civil society is through atheism. Do not promote diversity ; when you have it, bear it ; have as many sorts of religion as you find in your country ; there is a reasonable worship in them all. The others, the infidels, are outlaws of the constitution, not of this country, but of the human race. They are never, never to be supported, never to 20 be tolerated. Under the systematic attacks of these people I see some of the props of good government already begin to fail ; I see propagated principles which will not leave to religion even a toleration. I see myself sinking every day under the attacks of these wretched people—How shall I arm myself against them ? By uniting all those in affection who are united in the belief of the great principles of the Godhead that made and sustains the world. They who hold revelation give double assurance to the country. Even the man who does not hold revelation, yet who wishes that it were proved to him, who observes a pious silence with regard to it, such a man, though not a Christian, is governed by religious principles. Let him be tolerated in this country. Let it be but a serious religion, natural or revealed, take what you can get ;

cherish, blow up the slightest spark. One day it may be a pure and holy flame. By this proceeding you form an alliance, offensive and defensive, against those great ministers of darkness in the world who are endeavouring to shake all the works of God established in order and beauty.

*Burke as the Mentor of his Party*

(From a letter to the Duke of Richmond, November 17, 1772, in *Correspondence of Edmund Burke, 1744-97*; ed. Fitzwilliam and Bourke, in 4 volumes: vol. i, p. 375.)

As to your Grace's situation in the party and in the world, it would be the greatest injustice to Lord Rockingham not to say that he sees and feels his obligations to you in their full extent, and has often spoke as he ought of 10 the unparalleled part you have acted. His nearest and oldest friends are, much in the same degree, your own. There can be but one opinion on your conduct and abilities. With regard to others, your grace is very sensible that you have not made your court to the world by forming yourself to a flattering exterior; but you put me in mind of Mr. Wilkes's observation when he makes love, that he will engage in such a pursuit against the handsomest fellow in England, and only desires a month's start of his rival on account of his face. Your month is past; and if your 20 grace does not, everybody else does remark how much you grow on the public by the exertion of real talent and substantial virtue. You know you have already some fruits of them, and you will gather in such fruits every day, until your barns are as full as they can hold. One thing, and but one, I see against it, which is, that your grace dissipates your mind into too great a variety of minute pursuits, all of which, from the natural vehemence of your temperament, you follow with almost equal passion. It is wise, indeed, considering the many positive vexations, 30 and the innumerable bitter disappointments of pleasure in

the world, to have as many resources of satisfaction as possible within one's power. Whenever we concentrate the mind on one object, that object and life itself must go together. But though it is right to have reserves of employment, still some one object must be kept principal ; greatly and eminently so ; and the other masses and figures must preserve their due subordination to make out the grand composition of an important life. Upon these sound principles, which your grace would require in some of those arts which you protect, your public business, with all its 10 discouragements and mortifications, ought to be so much the principal figure with you that the rest, in comparison with it, should be next to nothing. . . .

It only gives pain to attribute our misfortunes to our faults, where circumstances will not suffer our repentance to amend them. Bad they are indeed ! but where things are desperate with regard to power, they are not always in a situation the most unfavourable to character. Decorum, firmness, consistency, courage, patient, manly perseverance,—these are the virtues of despair. They are worth 20 something, surely ; and none has profited so much of that situation as your Grace, nor could you have shown of what materials you are made in any other. Persons in your station of life ought to have long views. You people of great families and hereditary trusts and fortunes are not like such as I am, who, whatever we may be, by the rapidity of our growth, and even by the fruit we bear, and flatter ourselves that, while we creep on the ground, we belly into melons that are exquisite for size and flavour, yet still are but annual plants, that perish with our season, 30 and leave no sort of traces behind us. You, if you are what you ought to be, are in my eye the great oaks that shade a country, and perpetuate your benefits from generation to generation. The immediate power of a Duke of Richmond or a Marquis of Rockingham is not so much of moment ; but

if their conduct and example hand down their principles to their successors, then their houses become the public repositories and offices of record for the constitution ; not like the Tower or Rolls-chapel, where it is searched for, and sometimes in vain, in rotten parchments, under dripping and perishing walls, but in full vigour and acting in vital energy and power, in the character of the leading men and natural interests of the country.

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## AMERICA

*Dramatis Personae : (a) George Grenville*

(From the Speech on American Taxation, 1774.)

No man can believe that at this time of day I mean to lean on the venerable memory of a great man, whose loss we deplore in common. Our little party differences have been long ago composed ; and I have acted more with him, and certainly with more pleasure with him, than ever I acted against him. Undoubtedly Mr. Grenville was a first-rate figure in this country. With a masculine understanding, and a stout and resolute heart, he had an application undissipated and unwearied. He took public business not as a duty which he was to fulfil, but as a pleasure he was to enjoy ; and he seemed to have no delight out of this House, except in such things as some way related to the business that was to be done within it. If he was ambitious, I will say this for him, his ambition was of a noble and generous strain. It was to raise himself, not by the low, pimping politics of a court, but to win his way to power, through the laborious gradations of public service ; and to secure himself a well-earned rank in parliament by a thorough knowledge of its constitution and a perfect practice in all its business.

Sir, if such a man fell into errors, it must be from defects not intrinsical ; they must be rather sought in the particular habits of his life ; which, though they do not alter the groundwork of character, yet tinge it with their own hue. He was bred in a profession. He was bred to the law, which is, in my opinion, one of the first and noblest of human sciences ; a science which does more to quicken and invigorate the understanding than all the other kinds of learning put together ; but it is not apt, except in persons very happily born, to open and to liberalize the mind <sup>10</sup> exactly in the same proportion. Passing from that study, he did not go very largely into the world, but plunged into business ; I mean into the business of office ; and the limited and fixed methods and forms established there. Much knowledge is to be had undoubtedly in that line ; and there is no knowledge which is not valuable. But it may be truly said that men too much conversant in office are rarely minds of remarkable enlargement. Their habits of office are apt to give them a turn to think the substance of business not to be much more important than the forms <sup>20</sup> in which it is conducted. These forms are adapted to ordinary occasions ; and therefore persons who are nurtured in office do admirably well as long as things go on in their common order ; but when the high roads are broken up, and the waters out, when a new and troubled scene is opened, and the file affords no precedent, then it is that a greater knowledge of mankind and far more extensive comprehension of things is requisite than ever office gave, or than office can ever give. Mr. Grenville thought better of the wisdom and power of human legislation than in truth it deserves. He conceived, and many <sup>30</sup> conceived along with him, that the flourishing trade of this country was greatly owing to law and institution, and not quite so much to liberty ; for but too many are apt to believe regulation to be commerce, and taxes to be revenue.

Among regulations, that which stood first in reputation was his idol. I mean the act of navigation. He has often professed it to be so. The policy of that act is, I readily admit, in many respects well understood. But I do say that, if the act be suffered to run the full length of its principle, and is not changed and modified according to the change of times and the fluctuation of circumstances, it must do great mischief, and frequently even defeat its own purpose.

10 After the war, and in the last years of it, the trade of America had increased far beyond the speculations of the most sanguine imaginations. It swelled out on every side. It filled all its proper channels to the brim. It overflowed with a rich redundancy and, breaking its banks on the right and on the left, it spread out upon some places where it was indeed improper, upon others where it was only irregular. It is the nature of all greatness not to be exact, and great trade will always be attended with considerable abuses. The contraband will always keep pace in some 20 measure with the fair trade. It should stand as a fundamental maxim that no vulgar precaution ought to be employed in the cure of evils which are closely connected with the cause of our prosperity. Perhaps this great person turned his eyes somewhat less than was just towards the incredible increase of the fair trade; and looked with something of too exquisite a jealousy towards the contraband. He certainly felt a singular degree of anxiety on the subject; and even began to act from that passion earlier than is commonly imagined. For whilst he was first lord 30 of the admiralty, though not strictly called upon in his official line, he presented a very strong memorial to the lords of the treasury (my Lord Bute was then at the head of the board) heavily complaining of the growth of the illicit commerce in America. Some mischief happened even at that time from this over-earnest zeal. Much greater

happened afterwards, when it operated with greater power in the highest department of the finances. The bonds of the act of navigation were straitened so much that America was on the point of having no trade, either contraband or legitimate.

(b) *Lord Chatham*

(From the same.)

I HAVE done with the third period of your policy: that of your repeal; and the return of your ancient system, and your ancient tranquillity and concord. Sir, this period was not as long as it was happy. Another scene was opened, and other actors appeared on the stage. The state, <sup>10</sup> in the condition I have described it, was delivered into the hands of Lord Chatham, a great and celebrated name—a name that keeps the name of this country respectable in every other on the globe. It may be truly called,

Clarum et venerabile nomen  
Gentibus, et multum nostrae quod proderat urbi.

Sir, the venerable age of this great man, his merited rank, his superior eloquence, his splendid qualities, his eminent services, the vast space he fills in the eye of mankind, and, more than all the rest, his fall from power, <sup>20</sup> which, like death, canonizes and sanctifies a great character, will not suffer me to censure any part of his conduct. I am afraid to flatter him; I am sure I am not disposed to blame him. Let those who have betrayed him by their adulation insult him with their malevolence. But what I do not presume to censure I may have leave to lament. For a wise man, he seemed to me at that time to be governed too much by general maxims. I speak with the freedom of history, and I hope without offence. One or two of these maxims, flowing from an opinion not the most indulgent <sup>30</sup> to our unhappy species, and surely a little too general,

led him into measures that were generally mischievous to himself, and for that reason, among others, perhaps fatal to his country ;—measures, the effect of which, I am afraid, are for ever incurable. He made an administration so checkered and speckled ; he put together a piece of joinery so crossly indented and whimsically dove-tailed ; a cabinet so variously inlaid ; such a piece of diversified mosaic ; such a tessellated pavement without cement ; here a bit of black stone, and there a bit of white ;  
10 patriots and courtiers, king's friends and republicans ; Whigs and Tories ; treacherous friends and open enemies ; —that it was, indeed, a very curious show ; but utterly unsafe to touch, and unsure to stand on. The colleagues whom he had assorted at the same boards stared at each other, and were obliged to ask, ‘ Sir, your name ?—Sir, you have the advantage of me—Mr. Such-a-one—I beg a thousand pardons——’ I venture to say, it did so happen that persons had a single office divided between them who had never spoken to each other in their lives,  
20 until they found themselves, they knew not how, pigging together, heads and points, in the same truckle-bed.<sup>1</sup>

Sir, in consequence of this arrangement, having put so much the larger part of his enemies and opposers into power, the confusion was such that his own principles could not possibly have any effect or influence in the conduct of affairs. If ever he fell into a fit of the gout, or if any other cause withdrew him from public cares, principles directly the contrary were sure to predominate. When he had executed his plan, he had not an inch of ground to  
30 stand upon. When he had accomplished his scheme of administration, he was no longer a minister.

When his face was hid but for a moment, his whole system was on a wide sea, without chart or compass.

<sup>1</sup> Supposed to allude to the Right Honourable Lord North, and George Cooke, Esq., who were made joint paymasters in the summer of 1766, on the removal of the Rockingham administration.

The gentlemen, his particular friends, who, with the names of various departments of ministry, were admitted to seem as if they acted a part under him, with a modesty that becomes all men, and with a confidence in him which was justified even in its extravagance by his superior abilities, had never in any instance presumed upon any opinion of their own. Deprived of his guiding influence, they were whirled about, the sport of every gust, and easily driven into any port ; and as those who joined with them in manning the vessel were the most directly opposite to his <sup>10</sup> opinions, measures, and character, and far the most artful and most powerful of the set, they easily prevailed, so as to seize upon the vacant, unoccupied, and derelict minds of his friends, and instantly they turned the vessel wholly out of the course of his policy. As if it were to insult as well as to betray him, even long before the close of the first session of his administration, when everything was publicly transacted, and with great parade, in his name, they made an act declaring it highly just and expedient to raise a revenue in America. For even then, sir, even <sup>20</sup> before this splendid orb was entirely set, and while the western horizon was in a blaze with his descending glory, on the opposite quarter of the heavens arose another luminary, and, for his hour, became lord of the ascendant.

(c) *Charles Townshend*

(From the same.)

This light, too, is passed and set for ever. You understand, to be sure, that I speak of Charles Townshend, officially the reproducer of this fatal scheme, whom I cannot even now remember without some degree of sensibility. In truth, sir, he was the delight and ornament of this House, and the charm of every private society which he honoured <sup>30</sup> with his presence. Perhaps there never arose in this

country, nor in any country, a man of a more pointed and finished wit, and (where his passions were not concerned) of a more refined, exquisite, and penetrating judgement. If he had not so great a stock, as some have had who flourished formerly, of knowledge long treasured up, he knew, better by far than any man I ever was acquainted with, how to bring together within a short time all that was necessary to establish, to illustrate, and to decorate that side of the question he supported. He stated his matter skilfully and powerfully. He particularly excelled in a most luminous explanation and display of his subject. His style of argument was neither trite and vulgar, nor subtle and abstruse. He hit the House just between wind and water ; and, not being troubled with too anxious a zeal for any matter in question, he was never more tedious or more earnest than the preconceived opinions and present temper of his hearers required, to whom he was always in perfect unison. He conformed exactly to the temper of the House ; and he seemed to guide, because he was always sure to follow it. . . .

Besides the characters of the individuals that compose our body, it is impossible, Mr. Speaker, not to observe, that this House has a collective character of its own. That character, too, however imperfect, is not unamiable. Like all great public collections of men, you possess a marked love of virtue, and an abhorrence of vice. But among vices there is none which the House abhors in the same degree with *obstinacy*. Obstinacy, sir, is certainly a great vice ; and in the changeful state of political affairs it is frequently the cause of great mischief. It happens, however, very unfortunately, that almost the whole line of the great and masculine virtues, constancy, gravity, magnanimity, fortitude, fidelity, and firmness, are closely allied to this disagreeable quality, of which you have so just an abhorrence ; and, in their excess, all these virtues

very easily fall into it. He who paid such a punctilious attention to all your feelings, certainly took care not to shock them by that vice which is the most disgusting to you.

That fear of displeasing those who ought most to be pleased betrayed him sometimes into the other extreme. He had voted, and, in the year 1765, had been an advocate for the Stamp Act. Things and the disposition of men's mind were changed. In short, the Stamp Act began to be no favourite in this House. He therefore attended at the 10 private meeting in which the resolutions moved by a right honourable gentleman were settled ; resolutions leading to the repeal. The next day he voted for that repeal. . . .

The very next session, as the fashion of this world passeth away, the repeal began to be in as bad an odour in this House as the Stamp Act had been in the session before. To conform to the temper which began to prevail, and to prevail mostly amongst those most in power, he declared, very early in the winter, that a revenue must be had out of America.

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### *Progress and Enterprise of the Americans*

(From the Speech on Conciliation with the Colonies, March 22, 1775.)

MR. SPEAKER, I cannot prevail on myself to hurry over this great consideration. It is good for us to be here. We stand where we have an immense view of what is and what is past. Clouds indeed, and darkness rest upon the future. Let us, however, before we descend from this noble eminence, reflect that this growth of our national prosperity has happened within the short period of the life of man. It has happened within sixty-eight years. There are those alive whose memory might touch the two extremities. For instance, my Lord Bathurst might remember all the 30 stages of the progress. He was in 1704 of an age at least

to be made to comprehend such things. He was then old enough *acta parentum iam legere, et quae sit poteuit cognoscere virtus*—Suppose, sir, that the angel of this auspicious youth, foreseeing the many virtues which made him one of the most amiable, as he is one of the most fortunate men of his age, had opened to him in vision that when, in the fourth generation, the third prince of the house of Brunswick had sat twelve years on the throne of that nation which (by the happy issue of moderate and healing counsels) 10 was to be made Great Britain, he should see his son, Lord Chancellor of England, turn back the current of hereditary dignity to its fountain, and raise him to an higher rank of peerage, whilst he enriched the family with a new one—if, amidst these bright and happy scenes of domestic honour and prosperity, that angel should have drawn up the curtain, and unfolded the rising glories of his country and, whilst he was gazing with admiration on the then commercial grandeur of England, the genius should point out to him a little speck, scarce visible in the mass of the national 20 interest, a small seminal principle, rather than a formed body, and should tell him—‘ Young man, there is America—which at this day serves for little more than to amuse you with stories of savage men, and uncouth manners, yet shall, before you taste of death, show itself equal to the whole of that commerce which now attracts the envy of the world. Whatever England has been growing to by a progressive increase of improvement, brought in by varieties of people, by succession of civilizing conquests and civilizing settlements in a series of seventeen hundred 30 years, you shall see as much added to her by America in the course of a single life ! ’ If this state of his country had been foretold to him, would it not require all the sanguine credulity of youth, and all the fervid glow of enthusiasm, to make him believe it ? Fortunate man, he has lived to see it ! Fortunate indeed, if he lives to see

nothing that shall vary the prospect, and cloud the setting of his day! . . .

As to the wealth which the colonies have drawn from the sea by your fisheries, you had all that matter fully opened at your bar. You surely thought those acquisitions of value, for they seemed even to excite your envy; and yet the spirit by which that enterprising employment has been exercised ought rather, in my opinion, to have raised your esteem and admiration. And pray, sir, what in the world is equal to it? Pass by the other parts, and look at 10 the manner in which the people of New England have of late carried on the whale fishery. Whilst we follow them among the tumbling mountains of ice, and behold them penetrating into the deepest frozen recesses of Hudson's Bay and Davis's Straits, whilst we are looking for them beneath the arctic circle, we hear that they have pierced into the opposite region of polar cold, that they are at the antipodes, and engaged under the frozen serpent of the south. Falkland Island, which seemed too remote and romantic an object for the grasp of national ambition, 20 is but a stage and resting-place in the progress of their victorious industry. Nor is the equinoctial heat more discouraging to them than the accumulated winter of both the poles. We know that whilst some of them draw the line and strike the harpoon on the coast of Africa, others run the longitude and pursue their gigantic game along the coast of Brazil. No sea but what is vexed by their fisheries. No climate that is not witness to their toils. Neither the perseverance of Holland, nor the activity of France, nor the dexterous and firm sagacity of English enterprise ever 30 carried this most perilous mode of hard industry to the extent to which it has been pushed by this recent people; a people who are still, as it were, but in the gristle and not yet hardened into the bone of manhood. When I contemplate these things; when I know that the colonies in

general owe little or nothing to any care of ours, and that they are not squeezed into this happy form by the constraints of watchful and suspicious government, but that, through a wise and salutary neglect, a generous nature has been suffered to take her own way to perfection ; when I reflect upon these effects, when I see how profitable they have been to us, I feel all the pride of power sink and all presumption in the wisdom of human contrivances melt and die away within me. My rigour relents. I pardon something to the spirit of liberty.

### *The Policy of Force*

(From the same.)

I AM sensible, sir, that all which I have asserted in my detail is admitted in the gross ; but that quite a different conclusion is drawn from it. America, gentlemen say, is a noble object. It is an object well worth fighting for. Certainly it is, if fighting a people be the best way of gaining them. Gentlemen in this respect will be led to their choice of means by their complexions and their habits. Those who understand the military art will of course have some predilection for it. Those who wield the thunder of the state may have more confidence in the efficacy of arms. But I confess, possibly for want of this knowledge, my opinion is much more in favour of prudent management, than of force ; considering force not as an odious, but a feeble instrument for preserving a people so numerous, so active, so growing, so spirited as this, in a profitable and subordinate connexion with us.

First, sir, permit me to observe that the use of force alone is but *temporary*. It may subdue for a moment ; but it does not remove the necessity of subduing again : and a nation is not governed which is perpetually to be conquered.

My next objection is its *uncertainty*. Terror is not

always the effect of force ; and an armament is not a victory. If you do not succeed, you are without resource ; for, conciliation failing, force remains ; but, force failing, no further hope of reconciliation is left. Power and authority are sometimes bought by kindness ; but they can never be begged as alms by an impoverished and defeated violence.

A further objection to force is that you *impair the object* by your very endeavours to preserve it. The thing you fought for is not the thing which you recover : but <sup>10</sup> depreciated, sunk, wasted, and consumed in the contest. Nothing less will content me than *whole America*. I do not choose to consume its strength along with our own ; because in all parts it is the British strength that I consume. I do not choose to be caught by a foreign enemy at the end of this exhausting conflict ; and still less in the midst of it. I may escape ; but I can make no insurance against such an event. Let me add that I do not choose wholly to break the American spirit ; because it is the spirit that has made the country.

<sup>20</sup> Lastly, we have no sort of *experience* in favour of force as an instrument in the rule of our colonies. Their growth and their utility has been owing to method altogether different. Our ancient indulgence has been said to be pursued to a fault. It may be so. But we know, if feeling is evidence, that our fault was more tolerable than our attempt to mend it ; and our sin far more salutary than our penitence.

### *The Main Element of the American Character*

(From the same.)

THESE, sir, are my reasons for not entertaining that high opinion of untried force, by which many gentlemen, <sup>30</sup> for whose sentiments in other particulars I have great respect, seem to be so greatly captivated. But there is

still behind a third consideration concerning this object, which serves to determine my opinion on the sort of policy which ought to be pursued in the management of America, even more than its population and its commerce, I mean its *temper and character*.

In this character of the Americans, a love of freedom is the predominating feature which marks and distinguishes the whole: and as an ardent is always a jealous affection, your colonies become suspicious, restive, and ~~10~~ untractable, whenever they see the least attempt to wrest from them by force, or shuffle from them by chicane, what they think the only advantage worth living for. This fierce spirit of liberty is stronger in the English colonies probably than in any other people of the earth; and this from a great variety of powerful causes; which, to understand the true temper of their minds, and the direction which this spirit takes, it will not be amiss to lay open somewhat more largely.

First, the people of the colonies are descendants of ~~20~~ Englishmen. England, sir, is a nation, which still I hope respects, and formerly adored, her freedom. The colonists emigrated from you when this part of your character was most predominant; and they took this bias and direction the moment they parted from your hands. They are therefore not only devoted to liberty, but to liberty according to English ideas, and on English principles. Abstract liberty, like other mere abstractions, is not to be found.. Liberty inheres in some sensible object; and every nation has formed to itself some favourite point, which by way of ~~30~~ eminence becomes the criterion of their happiness. It happened, you know, sir, that the great contests for freedom in this country were from the earliest times chiefly upon the question of taxing. Most of the contests in the ancient commonwealths turned primarily on the right of election of magistrates; or on the balance among the several

orders of the state. The question of money was not with them so immediate. But in England it was otherwise. On this point of taxes the ablest pens, and most eloquent tongues, have been exercised ; the greatest spirits have acted and suffered. In order to give the fullest satisfaction concerning the importance of this point, it was not only necessary for those who in argument defended the excellence of the English constitution to insist on this privilege of granting money as a dry point of fact, and to prove that the right had been acknowledged, in ancient parchments <sup>10</sup> and blind usages, to reside in a certain body called a House of Commons. They went much farther ; they attempted to prove, and they succeeded, that in theory it ought to be so, from the particular nature of a House of Commons, as an immediate representative of the people ; whether the old records had delivered this oracle or not. They took infinite pains to inculcate, as a fundamental principle, that in all monarchies the people must in effect themselves, immediately or immedately, possess the power of granting their own money, or no shadow of liberty could subsist. <sup>20</sup> The colonies draw from you, as with their life-blood, these ideas and principles. Their love of liberty, as with you, fixed and attached on this specific point of taxing. Liberty might be safe, or might be endangered in twenty other particulars without their being much pleased or alarmed. Here they felt its pulse ; and as they found that beat, they thought themselves sick or sound.

*You cannot cow the Americans by making them poor*

(From the same.)

As far as I am capable of discerning, there are but three ways of proceeding relative to this stubborn spirit which prevails in your colonies and disturbs your government. These are—to change that spirit, as inconvenient, <sup>30</sup> by removing the causes. To prosecute it as criminal. Or,

to comply with it as necessary. I would not be guilty of an imperfect enumeration ; I can think of but these three. Another has indeed been started, that of giving up the colonies ; but it met so slight a reception that I do not think myself obliged to dwell a great while upon it. It is nothing but a little sally of anger, like the frowardness of peevish children ; who, when they cannot get all they would have, are resolved to take nothing.

The first of these plans, to change the spirit as inconvenient, by removing the causes, I think is the most systematic proceeding. It is radical in its principle ; but it is attended with great difficulties ; some of them little short, as I conceive, of impossibilities. This will appear by examining into the plans which have been proposed.

As the growing population of the colonies is evidently one cause of their resistance, it was last session mentioned in both Houses by men of weight, and received not without applause, that, in order to check this evil, it would be proper for the crown to make no further grants of land. But to this scheme there are two objections. The first, that there is already so much unsettled land in private hands as to afford room for an immense future population, although the crown not only withheld its grants, but annihilated its soil. If this be the case, then the only effect of this avarice of desolation, this hoarding of a royal wilderness, would be to raise the value of the possessions in the hands of the great private monopolists, without any adequate check to the growing and alarming mischief of population.

But if you stopped your grants, what would be the consequence ? The people would occupy without grants. They have already so occupied in many places. You cannot station garrisons in every part of these deserts. If you drive the people from one place, they will carry on their

annual tillage, and remove with their flocks and herds to another. Many of the people in the back settlements are already little attached to particular situations. Already they have topped the Appalachian mountains. From thence they behold before them an immense plain, one vast, rich, level meadow: a square of five hundred miles. Over this they would wander without a possibility of restraint; they would change their manners with the habits of their life; would soon forget a government by which they were disowned; would become hordes of English Tartars; and, <sup>10</sup> pouring down upon your unfortified frontiers a fierce and irresistible cavalry, become masters of your governors and your counsellors, your collectors and comptrollers, and of all the slaves that adhered to them. Such would, and, in no long time, must be, the effect of attempting to forbid as a crime, and to suppress as an evil, the command and blessing of Providence, 'Increase and multiply'. Such would be the happy result of an endeavour to keep as a lair of wild beasts that earth which God, by an express charter, has given to the children of men. Far different, and surely <sup>20</sup> much wiser, has been our policy hitherto. Hitherto we have invited our people, by every kind of bounty, to fixed establishments. We have invited the husbandman to look to authority for his title. We have taught him piously to believe in the mysterious virtue of wax and parchment. We have thrown each tract of land, as it was peopled, into districts: that the ruling power should never be wholly out of sight. We have settled all we could; and we have carefully attended every settlement with government.

Adhering, sir, as I do, to this policy, as well as for the reasons I have just given, I think this new project of hedging-in population to be neither prudent nor practicable.

To impoverish the colonies in general, and in particular to arrest the noble course of their marine enterprises, would

be a more easy task. I freely confess it. We have shown a disposition to a system of this kind ; a disposition even to continue the restraint after the offence ; looking on ourselves as rivals to our colonies, and persuaded that of course we must gain all that they shall lose. Much mischief we may certainly do. The power inadequate to all other things is often more than sufficient for this. I do not look on the direct and immediate power of the colonies to resist our violence as very formidable. In this, however, 10 I may be mistaken. But when I consider that we have colonies for no purpose but to be serviceable to us, it seems to my poor understanding a little preposterous to make them unserviceable, in order to keep them obedient. It is, in truth, nothing more than the old and, as I thought, exploded problem of tyranny, which proposes to beggar its subjects into submission. But remember, when you have completed your system of impoverishment, that nature still proceeds in her ordinary course ; that discontent will increase with misery ; and that there are critical 20 moments in the fortunes of all states, when they who are too weak to contribute to your prosperity may be strong enough to complete your ruin. *Spoliatis arma supersunt.*

The temper and character which prevail in our colonies are, I am afraid, unalterable by any human art. We cannot, I fear, falsify the pedigree of this fierce people, and persuade them that they are not sprung from a nation in whose veins the blood of freedom circulates. The language in which they would hear you tell them this tale would detect the imposition ; your speech would betray 30 you. An Englishman is the unfittest person on earth to argue another Englishman into slavery. . . .

But let us suppose all these moral difficulties got over. The ocean remains. You cannot pump this dry ; and as long as it continues in its present bed, so long all the causes which weaken authority by distance will continue.

‘ Ye gods, annihilate but space and time, and make two lovers happy ! ’—was a pious and passionate prayer ;—but just as reasonable as many of the serious wishes of very grave and solemn politicians.

*Nor can you prosecute them as criminals*

(From the same.)

IF then, sir, it seems almost desperate to think of any alterative course, for changing the moral causes (and not quite easy to remove the natural) which produce prejudices irreconcilable to the late exercise of our authority ; but that the spirit infallibly will continue ; and, continuing, will produce such effects as now embarrass us ; the <sup>10</sup> second mode under consideration is, to prosecute that spirit in its overt acts, as *criminal*.

At this proposition I must pause a moment. The thing seems a great deal too big for my ideas of jurisprudence. It should seem, to my way of conceiving such matters, that there is a very wide difference in reason and policy between the mode of proceeding on the irregular conduct of scattered individuals, or even of bands of men, who disturb order within the state, and the civil dissensions which may, from time to time, on great questions, agitate <sup>20</sup> the several communities which compose a great empire. It looks to me to be narrow and pedantic to apply the ordinary ideas of criminal justice to this great public contest. I do not know the method of drawing up an indictment against a whole people. I cannot insult and ridicule the feelings of millions of my fellow-creatures, as Sir Edward Coke insulted one excellent individual (Sir Walter Raleigh) at the bar. I am not ripe to pass sentence on the gravest public bodies, entrusted with magistracies of great authority and dignity, and charged with the <sup>30</sup> safety of their fellow-citizens, upon the very same title that I am. I really think that for wise men this is not

judicious ; for sober men, not decent ; for minds tinctured with humanity, not mild and merciful.

Perhaps, sir, I am mistaken in my idea of an empire, as distinguished from a single state or kingdom. But my idea of it is this ; that an empire is the aggregate of many states under one common head ; whether this head be a monarch, or a presiding republic. It does, in such constitutions, frequently happen (and nothing but the dismal, cold, dead uniformity of servitude can prevent its happening) that the subordinate parts have many local privileges and immunities. Between these privileges and the supreme common authority the line may be extremely nice. Of course disputes, often too very bitter disputes, and much ill blood will arise. But though every privilege is an exemption (in the case) from the ordinary exercise of the supreme authority, it is no denial of it. The claim of a privilege seems rather, *ex vi termini*, to imply a superior power. For to talk of the privileges of a state, or of a person, who has no superior, is hardly any better than speaking nonsense. Now, in such unfortunate quarrels among the component parts of a great political union of communities I can scarcely conceive anything more completely imprudent than for the head of the empire to insist that, if any privilege is pleaded against his will or his acts, his whole authority is denied ; instantly to proclaim rebellion, to beat to arms, and to put the offending provinces under the ban. Will not this, sir, very soon teach the provinces to make no distinctions on their part ? Will it not teach them that the government against which a claim of liberty is tantamount to high treason is a government to which submission is equivalent to slavery ? It may not always be quite convenient to impress dependent communities with such an idea.

We are, indeed, in all disputes with the colonies, by the necessity of things, the judge. It is true, sir. But I confess,

that the character of judge in my own cause is a thing that frightens me. Instead of filling me with pride, I am exceedingly humbled by it. I cannot proceed with a stern, assured, judicial confidence, until I find myself in something more like a judicial character. I must have these hesitations as long as I am compelled to recollect that, in my little reading upon such contests as these, the sense of mankind has at least as often decided against the superior as the subordinate power. Sir, let me add too that the opinion of my having some abstract right in my favour 10 would not put me much at my ease in passing sentence; unless I could be sure that there were no rights which, in their exercise under certain circumstances, were not the most odious of all wrongs and the most vexatious of all injustice.

*Conciliation the only remedy*

(From the same.)

IF then the removal of the causes of this spirit of American liberty be, for the greater part, or rather entirely, impracticable; if the ideas of criminal process be inapplicable, or if applicable, are in the highest degree inexpedient; what way yet remains? No way is open, but the third and last 20—to comply with the American spirit as necessary; or, if you please, to submit to it as a necessary evil.

If we adopt this mode: if we mean to conciliate and concede; let us see of what nature the concession ought to be: to ascertain the nature of our concession, we must look at their complaint. The colonies complain that they have not the characteristic mark and seal of British freedom. They complain that they are taxed in a parliament in which they are not represented. If you mean to satisfy them at all, you must satisfy them with regard to this 30 complaint. If you mean to please any people, you must give them the boon which they ask; not what you may

think better for them, but of a kind totally different. Such an act may be a wise regulation, but it is no concession ; whereas our present theme is the mode of giving satisfaction.

Sir, I think you must perceive that I am resolved this day to have nothing at all to do with the question of the right of taxation. Some gentlemen startle—but it is true ; I put it totally out of the question. It is less than nothing in my consideration. I do not indeed wonder, nor will **10** you, sir, that gentlemen of profound learning are fond of displaying it on this profound subject. But my consideration is narrow, confined, and wholly limited to the policy of the question. I do not examine whether the giving away a man's money be a power excepted and reserved out of the general trust of government ; and how far all mankind, in all forms of polity, are entitled to an exercise of that right by the charter of nature. Or whether, on the contrary, a right of taxation is necessarily involved in the general principle of legislation, and inseparable from the **20** ordinary supreme power. These are deep questions, where great names militate against each other ; where reason is perplexed ; and an appeal to authorities only thickens the confusion. For high and reverend authorities lift up their heads on both sides ; and there is no sure footing in the middle. This point is the *great Serbonian bog, betwixt Damiata and Mount Casius old, where armies whole have sunk.* I do not intend to be overwhelmed in that bog, though in such respectable company. The question with me is, not whether you have a right to render your people **30** miserable ; but whether it is not your interest to make them happy. It is not what a lawyer tells me I *may* do ; but what humanity, reason, and justice tell me I ought to do. Is a politic act the worse for being a generous one ? Is no concession proper, but that which is made from your want of right to keep what you grant ? Or does it lessen

the grace or dignity of relaxing in the exercise of an odious claim because you have your evidence-room full of titles and your magazines stuffed with arms to enforce them? What signify all those titles, and all those arms? Of what avail are they, when the reason of the thing tells me that the assertion of my title is the loss of my suit; and that I could do nothing but wound myself by the use of my own weapons?

*The Logical Chain of Burke's Policy*  
(From the same.)

My resolutions therefore mean to establish the equity and justice of a taxation of America, by *grant*, and not by <sup>10</sup> *imposition*. To mark the *legal competency* of the colony assemblies for the support of their government in peace, and for public aids in time of war. To acknowledge that this legal competency has had a *dutiful and beneficial exercise*; and that experience has shown the *benefit of their grants*, and the *futility of parliamentary taxation as a method of supply*. . . .

Sir, I shall open the whole plan to you together, with such observations on the motions as may tend to illustrate them where they may want explanation. The first is <sup>20</sup> a resolution—‘That the colonies and plantations of Great Britain in North America, consisting of fourteen separate governments, and containing two millions and upwards of free inhabitants, have not had the liberty and privilege of electing and sending any knights and burgesses, or others, to represent them in the high court of parliament.’ This is a plain matter of fact, necessary to be laid down, and (excepting the description) it is laid down in the language of the constitution; it is taken nearly *verbatim* from acts of parliament.

The second is like unto the first—‘That the said colonies and plantations have been liable to, and bounded by,

several subsidies, payments, rates, and taxes, given and granted by parliament, though the said colonies and plantations have not their knights and burgesses in the said high court of parliament, of their own election, to represent the condition of their country ; by lack whereof they have been oftentimes touched and grieved by subsidies given, granted, and assented to in the said court, in a manner prejudicial to the commonwealth, quietness, rest, and peace of the subjects inhabiting within the  
10 same.'

Is this description too hot, or too cold, too strong, or too weak ? Does it arrogate too much to the supreme legislature ? Does it lean too much to the claims of the people ? If it runs into any of these errors, the fault is not mine. It is the language of your own ancient acts of parliament.

Non meus hic sermo, sed quae p[re]cepit Ofellus,  
rusticus, abnormis sapiens.

It is the genuine produce of the ancient, rustic, manly, home-bred sense of this country. I did not dare to rub  
20 off a particle of the venerable rust that rather adorns and preserves than destroys the metal. It would be a profanation to touch with a tool the stones which construct the sacred altar of peace. I would not violate with modern polish the ingenuous and noble roughness of these truly constitutional materials. Above all things, I was resolved not to be guilty of tampering : the odious vice of restless and unstable minds. I put my foot in the tracks of our forefathers ; where I can neither wander nor stumble. Determining to fix articles of peace, I was resolved not to  
30 be wise beyond what was written ; I was resolved to use nothing else than the form of sound words ; to let others abound in their own sense ; and carefully to abstain from all expressions of my own. What the law has said, I say. In all things else I am silent. I have no organ but for her words. This, if it be not ingenious, I am sure is safe. . . .

The next proposition is—‘ That, from the distance of the said colonies, and from other circumstances, no method hath hitherto been devised for procuring a representation in parliament for the said colonies.’ This is an assertion of a fact. I go no further on the paper; though, in my private judgement, a useful representation is impossible; I am sure it is not desired by them; nor ought it perhaps by us; but I abstain from opinions.

The fourth resolution is—‘ That each of the said colonies hath within itself a body, chosen in part, or in the whole, 10 by the freemen, freeholders, or other free inhabitants thereof, commonly called the general assembly or general court; with powers legally to raise, levy, and assess, according to the several usage of such colonies, duties and taxes towards defraying all sorts of public services.’

This competence in the colony assemblies is certain. It is proved by the whole tenor of their acts of supply in all the assemblies, in which the constant style of granting is, ‘ an aid to his majesty’; and acts granting to the crown 20 have regularly for near a century passed the public offices without dispute. . . .

The fifth resolution is also a resolution of fact—‘ That the said general assemblies, general courts, or other bodies legally qualified as aforesaid, have at sundry times freely granted several large subsidies and public aids for his majesty’s service, according to their abilities, when required thereto by letter from one of his majesty’s principal secretaries of state; and that their right to grant the same, and their cheerfulness and sufficiency in the said grants, 30 have been at sundry times acknowledged by parliament.’ . . .

I think, then, I am, from those journals [the Journals of the House], justified in the sixth and last resolution, which is—‘ That it hath been found by experience, that the manner of granting the said supplies and aids, by the said general assemblies, hath been more agreeable to the said

colonies, and more beneficial and conducive to the public service, than the mode of giving and granting aids in parliament, to be raised and paid in the said colonies.' This makes the whole of the fundamental part of the plan. The conclusion is irresistible. You cannot say that you were driven by any necessity to an exercise of the utmost rights of legislature. You cannot assert that you took on yourselves the task of imposing colony taxes from the want of another legal body that is competent to the purpose of supplying the exigencies of the state without wounding the prejudices of the people. Neither is it true that the body so qualified, and having that competence, had neglected the duty.

### *The Well-tried Virtue of Compromise*

(From the same.)

I DO not know that the colonies have, in any general way, or in any cool hour, gone much beyond the demand of immunity in relation to taxes. It is not fair to judge of the temper or dispositions of any man, or any set of men, when they are composed and at rest, from their conduct, or their expressions, in a state of disturbance and irritation. It is besides a very great mistake to imagine that mankind follow up practically any speculative principle, either of government or of freedom, as far as it will go in argument and logical illation. We Englishmen stop very short of the principles upon which we support any given part of our constitution ; or even the whole of it together. I could easily, if I had not already tired you, give you very striking and convincing instances of it. This is nothing but what is natural and proper. All government, indeed every human benefit and enjoyment, every virtue, and every prudent act, is founded on compromise and barter. We balance inconveniences ; we give and take ; we remit some rights, that we may enjoy others ; and we choose

rather to be happy citizens than subtle disputants. As we must give away some natural liberty, to enjoy civil advantages ; so we must sacrifice some civil liberties for the advantages to be derived from the communion and fellowship of a great empire. But, in all fair dealings, the thing bought must bear some proportion to the purchase paid. None will barter away the immediate jewel of his soul. Though a great house is apt to make slaves haughty, yet it is purchasing a part of the artificial importance of a great empire too dear to pay for it all essential rights and <sup>10</sup> all the intrinsic dignity of human nature. None of us who would not risk his life rather than fall under a government purely arbitrary. But although there are some amongst us who think our constitution wants many improvements, to make it a complete system of liberty, perhaps none who are of that opinion would think it right to aim at such improvement by disturbing his country, and risking every-  
thing that is dear to him. In every arduous enterprise, we consider what we are to lose as well as what we are to gain ; and the more and better stake of liberty every <sup>20</sup> people possess, the less they will hazard in a vain attempt to make it more. These are *the cords of man*. Man acts from adequate motives relative to his interest ; and not on metaphysical speculations. Aristotle, the great master of reasoning, cautions us, and with great weight and propriety, against this species of delusive geometrical accuracy in moral arguments, as the most fallacious of all sophistry.

The Americans will have no interest contrary to the grandeur and glory of England, when they are not oppressed by the weight of it ; and they will rather be inclined to <sup>30</sup> respect the acts of a superintending legislature, when they see them the acts of that power which is itself the security, not the rival, of their secondary importance. In this assurance, my mind most perfectly acquiesces, and I confess I feel not the least alarm from the discontents which are

to arise from putting people at their ease ; nor do I apprehend the destruction of this empire from giving, by an act of free grace and indulgence, to two millions of my fellow-citizens some share of those rights upon which I have always been taught to value myself.

It is said, indeed, that this power of granting, vested in American assemblies, would dissolve the unity of the empire ; which was preserved entire, although Wales, and Chester, and Durham were added to it. Truly, Mr. Speaker, I do not know what this unity means ; nor has it ever been heard of, that I know, in the constitutional policy of this country. The very idea of subordination of parts excludes this notion of simple and undivided unity. England is the head ; but she is not the head and the members too. Ireland has ever had from the beginning a separate, but not an independent, legislature ; which, far from distracting, promoted the union of the whole. Everything was sweetly and harmoniously disposed through both islands for the conservation of English dominion and the communication of English liberties. I do not see that the same principles might not be carried into twenty islands, and with the same good effect. This is my model with regard to America, as far as the internal circumstances of the two countries are the same. I know no other unity of this empire than I can draw from its example during these periods, when it seemed to my poor understanding more united than it is now, or than it is likely to be by the present methods.

*Freedom a Lucrative Principle*

(From the same.)

BUT what (says the financier) is peace to us without money ? Your plan gives us no revenue. No ! But it does—For it secures to the subject the power of REFUSAL ; the first of all revenues. Experience is a cheat, and fact

a liar, if this power in the subject of proportioning his grant, or of not granting at all, has not been found the richest mine of revenue ever discovered by the skill or by the fortune of man. It does not indeed vote you £152,752 : 11 : 2 $\frac{3}{4}$ ths, nor any other paltry limited sum.—But it gives the strong box itself, the fund, the bank, from whence only revenues can arise amongst a people sensible of freedom : *Posita luditur arca.* Cannot you in England ; cannot you at this time of day ; cannot you, a House of Commons, trust to the principle which has raised so mighty 10 a revenue, and accumulated a debt of near 140 millions in this country ? Is this principle to be true in England and false everywhere else ? Is it not true in Ireland ? Has it not hitherto been true in the colonies ? Why should you presume that, in any country, a body duly constituted for any function will neglect to perform its duty, and abdicate its trust ? Such a presumption would go against all governments in all modes. But, in truth, this dread of penury of supply from a free assembly has no foundation in nature. For first observe that, beside the desire which all men have 20 naturally of supporting the honour of their own government, that sense of dignity, and that security to property, which ever attend freedom have a tendency to increase the stock of the free community. Most may be taken where most is accumulated. And what is the soil or climate where experience has not uniformly proved that the voluntary flow of heaped-up plenty, bursting from the weight of its own rich luxuriance, has ever run with a more copious stream of revenue than could be squeezed from the dry husks of oppressed indigence by the straining of 30 all the politic machinery in the world.

Next we know, that parties must ever exist in a free country. We know, too, that the emulations of such parties, their contradictions, their reciprocal necessities, their hopes, and their fears must send them all in their

turns to him that holds the balance of the state. The parties are the gamesters ; but government keeps the table, and is sure to be the winner in the end. When this game is played, I really think it is more to be feared that the people will be exhausted than that government will not be supplied. Whereas, whatever is got by acts of absolute power ill obeyed, because odious, or by contracts ill kept, because constrained, will be narrow, feeble, uncertain, and precarious. '*Ease would retract vows made to in pain, as violent and void.*'

I, for one, protest against compounding our demands : I declare against compounding for a poor limited sum, the immense, ever growing, eternal debt, which is due to generous government from protected freedom.

*Liberty the Bond of the British Empire*

(From the same.)

IF America gives you taxable objects, on which you lay your duties here, and gives you, at the same time, a surplus by a foreign sale of her commodities to pay the duties on these objects, which you tax at home, she has performed her part to the British revenue. But with regard to her own internal establishments, she may, I doubt not she will, contribute in moderation. I say in moderation ; for she ought not to be permitted to exhaust herself. She ought to be reserved to a war ; the weight of which, with the enemies that we are most likely to have, must be considerable in her quarter of the globe. There she may serve you and serve you essentially.

For that service, for all service, whether of revenue, trade, or empire, my trust is in her interest in the British constitution. My hold of the colonies is in the close affection which grows from common names, from kindred blood, from similar privileges, and equal protection. These are ties which, though light as air, are as strong as links of

iron. Let the colonies always keep the idea of their civil rights associated with your government ;—they will cling and grapple to you ; and no force under heaven would be of power to tear them from their allegiance. But let it be once understood that your government may be one thing, and their privileges another ; that these two things may exist without any mutual relation ; the cement is gone ; the cohesion is loosened ; and everything hastens to decay and dissolution. As long as you have the wisdom to keep the sovereign authority of this country as the sanctuary of 10 liberty, the sacred temple consecrated to our common faith, wherever the chosen race and sons of England worship freedom, they will turn their faces towards you. The more they multiply, the more friends you will have ; the more ardently they love liberty, the more perfect will be their obedience. Slavery they can have anywhere. It is a weed that grows in every soil. They may have it from Spain, they may have it from Prussia. But, until you become lost to all feeling of your true interest and your natural dignity, freedom they can have from none but you. This 20 is the commodity of price, of which you have the monopoly. This is the true act of navigation which binds to you the commerce of the colonies, and through them secures to you the wealth of the world. Deny them this participation of freedom, and you break that sole bond which originally made, and must still preserve the unity of the empire. Do not entertain so weak an imagination as that your registers and your bonds, your affidavits and your sufferances, your cockets and your clearances, are what form the great securities of your commerce. Do not dream that your 30 letters of office, and your instructions, and your suspending clauses are the things that hold together the great texture of this mysterious whole. These things do not make your government. Dead instruments, passive tools as they are, it is the spirit of the English communion that

gives all their life and efficacy to them. It is the spirit of the English constitution, which, infused through the mighty mass, pervades, feeds, unites, invigorates, vivifies every part of the empire, even down to the minutest member.

Is it not the same virtue which does everything for us here in England? Do you imagine, then, that it is the land-tax act which raises your revenue? that it is the annual vote in the committee of supply which gives you <sup>10</sup> your army? or that it is the mutiny bill which inspires it with bravery and discipline? No! surely not! It is the love of the people; it is their attachment to their government, from the sense of the deep stake they have in such a glorious institution, which gives you your army and your navy, and infuses into both that liberal obedience without which your army would be a base rabble, and your navy nothing but rotten timber.

All this, I know well enough, will sound wild and chimerical to the profane herd of those vulgar and mechanical <sup>20</sup> politicians who have no place among us; a sort of people who think that nothing exists but what is gross and material; and who therefore, far from being qualified to be directors of the great movement of empire, are not fit to turn a wheel in the machine. But to men truly initiated and rightly taught these ruling and master principles, which, in the opinion of such men as I have mentioned, have no substantial existence, are in truth everything, and all in all. Magnanimity in politics is not seldom the truest wisdom; and a great empire and little minds go ill together. If we <sup>30</sup> are conscious of our situation, and glow with zeal to fill our places as becomes our station and ourselves, we ought to auspicate all our public proceedings on America with the old warning of the Church, *Sursum corda!* We ought to elevate our minds to the greatness of that trust to which the order of Providence has called us. By adverting to

the dignity of this high calling our ancestors have turned a savage wilderness into a glorious empire: and have made the most extensive, and the only honourable conquests not by destroying, but by promoting the wealth, the number, the happiness of the human race. Let us get an American revenue as we have got an American empire. English privileges have made it all that it is; English privileges alone will make it all it can be.

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## INDIA

*The Peoples under British Rule*

(From the Speech on the East India Bill, December 1, 1783.)

MY next inquiry to that of the number is the quality and description of the inhabitants. This multitude of 10 men does not consist of an abject and barbarous populace; much less of gangs of savages, like the Guaranes and Chiquitos, who wander on the waste borders of the river of Amazons, or the Plate; but a people for ages civilized and cultivated: cultivated by all the arts of polished life, whilst we were yet in the woods. There have been (and still the skeletons remain) princes once of great dignity, authority, and opulence. There are to be found the chiefs of tribes and nations. There is to be found an ancient and venerable priesthood, the depository 20 of their laws, learning, and history, the guides of the people whilst living, and their consolation in death; a nobility of great antiquity and renown; a multitude of cities, not exceeded in population and trade by those of the first class in Europe; merchants and bankers, individual houses of whom have once vied in capital with the Bank of England, whose credit had often supported a tottering state, and preserved their governments in the midst of war and desolation; millions of ingenious manufacturers

and mechanics ; millions of the most diligent, and not the least intelligent, tillers of the earth. There are to be found almost all the religions professed by men, the Braminical, the Mussulman, the Eastern and the Western Christian.

If I were to take the whole aggregate of our possessions there, I should compare it, as the nearest parallel I can find, with the empire of Germany. Our immediate possessions I should compare with the Austrian dominions, 10 and they would not suffer in the comparison. The nabob of Oude might stand for the King of Prussia ; the nabob of Arcot I would compare, as superior in territory, and equal in revenue, to the Elector of Saxony. Cheyt Sing, the rajah of Benares, might well rank with the Prince of Hesse, at least ; and the rajah of Tanjore (though hardly equal in extent of dominion, superior in revenue) to the Elector of Bavaria. The Polygars and the northern Zemindars, and other great chiefs might well class with the rest of the princes, dukes, counts, marquises, and 20 bishops in the empire ; all of whom I mention to honour, and surely without disparagement to any or all of those most respectable princes and grandees.

All this vast mass, composed of so many orders and classes of men, is again infinitely diversified by manners, by religion, by hereditary employment, through all their possible combinations. This renders the handling of India a matter in a high degree critical and delicate. But oh ! it has been handled rudely indeed. Even some of the reformers seem to have forgot that they had any 30 thing to do but to regulate the tenants of a manor, or the shopkeepers of the next county town.

*The Peculiar Task of its Government*

(From the Speech on the Impeachment of Warren Hastings: Third Day, February 15, 1788.)

My lords, the first description of people who are subjected virtually to the British empire through those mediums which I have described to you are the original inhabitants of Hindustan, who have in all time, and beyond all the eras which we use (I mean always the two grand eras excepted), been the aboriginal inhabitants and proprietors of that country; with manners, religion, customs, and usages appropriated to themselves, and little resembling those of the rest of mankind. This description of men is commonly called Gentoos. The system and principle of <sup>10</sup> that government is locality. Their laws, their manners, their religion, are all local.

Their legislator, whoever he was (for who he was is a matter lost in the midst of a most obscure antiquity), had it as a great leading principle of his policy to connect the people with their soil. Accordingly, by one of those anomalies which a larger acquaintance with our species daily discovers, and which perhaps an attentive reflection might explain in the nature of man, this aboriginal people of India, who are the softest in their manners of any of <sup>20</sup> our race, approaching almost to feminine tenderness, who are formed constitutionally benevolent, and in many particulars made to fill a larger circle of benevolence than our morals take in, who extend their goodwill to the whole animal creation,—these people are, of all nations, the most unalliable to any other part of mankind. They cannot—the highest orders of them, at least, cannot—come into contact with any other. That bond which is one of the chief instruments of society, and which, supporting the individual, connects the species, can have no <sup>30</sup> existence with them—I mean the convivial bond. That

race can be held to no other by that great link of life. No Hindoo can mix at meals even with those on whom he depends for the meat he eats. This circumstance renders it difficult for us to enter with due sympathy into their concerns, or for them to enter into ours, even when we meet on the same ground. But there are other circumstances which render our intercourse, in our mutual relation, very full of difficulty. The sea is between us. The mass of that element which, by appearing to disconnect, ~~to~~ unites mankind, is to them a forbidden road. It is a great gulf fixed between you and them—not so much that elementary gulf, but that gulf which manners, opinions, and laws have radicated in the very nature of the people. None of their high castes, without great danger to his situation, religion, rank, and estimation, can ever pass the sea ; and this forbids, for ever, all direct communication between that country and this. That material and affecting circumstance, my lords, makes it ten times more necessary, since they cannot come to us, to keep a strict eye upon all ~~20~~ persons who go to them. It imposes upon us a stricter duty to guard, with a firm and powerful vigilance, those whose principles of conscience weaken their principles of self-defence. If we undertake to govern the inhabitants of such a country, we must govern them upon their own principles and maxims, and not upon ours. We must not think to force them into the narrow circle of our ideas ; we must extend ours to take in their system of opinions and rites, and the necessities which result from both. All change on their part is absolutely impracticable. We ~~30~~ have more versatility of character and manners, and it is we who must conform. We know what the empire of opinion is in human nature. I had almost said that the law of opinion was human nature itself.

*Conquest and Arbitrary Power*

(From the same : Fourth Day, February 16, 1788.)

THERE is a sacred veil to be drawn over the beginnings of all governments. Ours, in India, had an origin like those which time has sanctified by obscurity. Time, in the origin of most governments, has thrown this mysterious veil over them ; prudence and discretion make it necessary to throw something of the same drapery over more recent foundations, in which otherwise the fortune, the genius, the talents, and military virtue of this nation never shone more conspicuously. But, whatever necessity might hide or excuse or palliate in the acquisition of power, a wise 10 nation, when it has once made a revolution upon its own principles and for its own ends, rests there. The first step to empire is revolution, by which power is conferred ; the next is good laws, good orders, good institutions, to give that power stability. . . .

*He* have arbitrary power ! My lords, the East India Company have not arbitrary power to give him ; the king has no arbitrary power to give him ; your lordships have not ; nor the Commons ; nor the whole legislature. We have no arbitrary power to give, because arbitrary power 20 is a thing which neither any man can hold nor any man can give. No man can lawfully govern himself according to his own will, much less can one person be governed by the will of another. We are all born in subjection, all born equally, high and low, governors and governed, in subjection to one great, immutable, pre-existent law, prior to all our devices, and prior to all our contrivances, paramount to all our ideas and all our sensations, antecedent to our very existence, by which we are knit and connected in the eternal frame of the universe, out of which we cannot stir. 30

This great law does not arise from our conventions or compacts ; on the contrary, it gives to our conventions

and compacts all the force and sanction they can have ;—it does not arise from our vain institutions. Every good gift is of God ; all power is of God ;—and He, who has given the power, and from whom alone it originates, will never suffer the exercise of it to be practised upon any less solid foundation than the power itself. If then all dominion of man over man is the effect of the Divine disposition, it is bound by the eternal laws of Him that gave it, with which no human authority can dispense ; neither he that exercises it, nor even those who are subject to it : and, if they were mad enough to make an express compact that should release their magistrate from his duty, and should declare their lives, liberties, and properties dependent upon, not rules and laws, but his mere capricious will, that covenant would be void. The accepter of it has not his authority increased, but he has his crime doubled. Therefore can it be imagined, if this be true, that He will suffer this great gift of government, the greatest, the best that was ever given by God to mankind, to be the plaything and the sport of the feeble will of a man who, by a blasphemous, absurd, and petulant usurpation, would place his own feeble, contemptible, ridiculous will in the place of the Divine wisdom and justice ?

The title of conquest makes no difference at all. No conquest can give such a right ; for conquest, that is force, cannot convert its own injustice into a just title, by which it may rule others at its pleasure. By conquest, which is a more immediate designation of the hand of God, the conqueror succeeds to all the painful duties and subordination to the power of God which belonged to the sovereign whom he has displaced, just as if he had come in by the positive law of some descent or some election. To this at least he is strictly bound—he ought to govern them as he governs his own subjects. But every wise conqueror has gone much further than he was bound to

go. It has been his ambition and his policy to reconcile the vanquished to his fortune, to show that they had gained by the change, to convert their momentary suffering into a long benefit, and to draw from the humiliation of his enemies an accession to his own glory. This has been so constant a practice that it is to repeat the histories of all politic conquerors in all nations and in all times.

*The Devastation of the Carnatic by Hyder Ali*

(From the Speech on the Nabob of Arcot's debts, February 1785.)

AMONG the victims to this magnificent plan of universal plunder, worthy of the heroic avarice of the projectors, you have all heard (and he has made himself to be well <sup>10</sup> remembered) of an Indian chief called Hyder Ali Khan. This man possessed the western, as the company under the name of the nabob of Arcot does the eastern division of the Carnatic. It was among the leading measures in the design of this cabal (according to their own emphatic language) to *extirpate* this Hyder Ali. They declared the nabob of Arcot to be his sovereign, and himself to be a rebel, and publicly invested their instrument with the sovereignty of the kingdom of Mysore. But their victim was not of the passive kind. They were soon obliged to <sup>20</sup> conclude a treaty of peace and close alliance with this rebel, at the gates of Madras. Both before and since this treaty, every principle of policy pointed out this power as a natural alliance; and on his part it was courted by every sort of amicable office. But the cabinet council of English creditors would not suffer their nabob of Arcot to sign the treaty, nor even to give to a prince, at least his equal, the ordinary titles of respect and courtesy. From that time forward, a continued plot was carried on within the divan, black and white, of the nabob of Arcot for the <sup>30</sup> destruction of Hyder Ali. As to the outward members of the double, or rather treble government of Madras, which

had signed the treaty, they were always prevented by some overruling influence (which they do not describe, but which cannot be misunderstood) from performing what justice and interest combined so evidently to enforce.

When at length Hyder Ali found that he had to do with men who either would sign no convention, or whom no treaty and no signature could bind, and who were the determined enemies of human intercourse itself, he decreed to make the country possessed by these incorrigible and ~~10~~ predestinated criminals a memorable example to mankind. He resolved, in the gloomy recesses of a mind capacious of such things, to leave the whole Carnatic an everlasting monument of vengeance, and to put perpetual desolation as a barrier between him and those against whom the faith which holds the moral elements of the world together was no protection. He became at length so confident of his force, so collected in his might, that he made no secret whatsoever of his dreadful resolution. Having terminated his disputes with every enemy, and every rival, who ~~20~~ buried their mutual animosities in their common detestation against the creditors of the nabob of Arcot, he drew from every quarter whatever a savage ferocity could add to his new rudiments in the arts of destruction; and compounding all the materials of fury, havoc, and desolation into one black cloud, he hung for a while on the declivities of the mountains. Whilst the authors of all these evils were idly and stupidly gazing on this menacing meteor, which blackened all their horizon, it suddenly burst, and poured down the whole of its contents upon the ~~30~~ plains of the Carnatic. Then ensued a scene of woe, the like of which no eye had seen, no heart conceived, and which no tongue can adequately tell. All the horrors of war before known or heard of, were mercy to that new havoc. A storm of universal fire blasted every field, consumed every house, destroyed every temple. The miserable

inhabitants flying from their flaming villages, in part were slaughtered ; others, without regard to sex, to age, to the respect of rank, or sacredness of function, fathers torn from children, husbands from wives, enveloped in a whirlwind of cavalry and amidst the goading spears of drivers, and the trampling of pursuing horses, were swept into captivity in an unknown and hostile land. Those who were able to evade this tempest fled to the walled cities. But escaping from fire, sword, and exile, they fell into the jaws of famine.

The alms of the settlement, in this dreadful exigency, were certainly liberal ; and all was done by charity that private charity could do ; but it was a people in beggary ; it was a nation which stretched out its hands for food. For months together these creatures of sufferance, whose very excess and luxury in their most plenteous days had fallen short of the allowance of our austerest fasts, silent, patient, resigned, without sedition or disturbance, almost without complaint, perished by a hundred a day in the streets of Madras ; every day seventy at least laid their bodies in the streets, or on the glacis of Tanjore, and expired of famine in the granary of India. I was going to awake your justice towards this unhappy part of our fellow-citizens by bringing before you some of the circumstances of this plague of hunger. Of all the calamities which beset and waylay the life of man, this comes the nearest to our heart, and is that wherein the proudest of us all feels himself to be nothing more than he is. But I find myself unable to manage it with decorum. These details are of a species of horror so nauseous and disgusting ; they are so degrading to the sufferers and to the hearers ; they are so humiliating to human nature itself that, on better thoughts, I find it more advisable to throw a pall over this hideous object, and to leave it to your general conceptions.

For eighteen months, without intermission, this destruction raged from the gates of Madras to the gates of Tanjore ; and so completely did these masters in their art, Hyder Ali, and his more ferocious son, absolve themselves of their impious vow, that when the British armies traversed, as they did, the Carnatic for hundreds of miles in all directions, through the whole line of their march they did not see one man, not one woman, not one child, not one four-footed beast of any description whatever.

10 One dead, uniform silence reigned over the whole region. With the inconsiderable exceptions of the narrow vicinage of some few forts, I wish to be understood as speaking literally ;—I mean to produce to you more than three witnesses, above all exception, who will support this assertion in its full extent. That hurricane of war passed through every part of the central provinces of the Carnatic. Six or seven districts to the north and to the south (and these not wholly untouched) escaped the general ravage.

The Carnatic is a country not much inferior in extent  
20 to England. Figure to yourself, Mr. Speaker, the land in whose representative chair you sit ; figure to yourself the form and fashion of your sweet and cheerful country from Thames to Trent, north and south, and from the Irish to the German sea, east and west, emptied and embowelled (may God avert the omen of our crimes !) by so accomplished a desolation. Extend your imagination a little farther, and then suppose your ministers taking a survey of this scene of waste and desolation ; what would be your thoughts if you should be informed,  
30 that they were computing how much had been the amount of the excises, how much the customs, how much the land and malt tax, in order that they should charge (take it in the most favourable light) for public service, upon the relics of the satiated vengeance of relentless enemies, the whole of what England had yielded in the most

exuberant seasons of peace and abundance ? What would you call it ? To call it tyranny sublimed into madness, would be too faint an image ; yet this very madness is the principle upon which the ministers at your right hand have proceeded in their estimate of the revenues of the Carnatic, when they were providing, not supply for the establishment of its protection, but rewards for the authors of its ruin.

Every day you are fatigued and disgusted with this cant, ' the Carnatic is a country that will soon recover, <sup>10</sup> and become instantly as prosperous as ever.' They think they are talking to innocents, who will believe that, by sowing of dragons' teeth, men may come up ready grown and ready armed. They who will give themselves the trouble of considering (for it requires no great reach of thought, no very profound knowledge) the manner in which mankind are increased, and countries cultivated, will regard all this raving as it ought to be regarded. In order that the people, after a long period of vexation and plunder, may be in a condition to maintain government, <sup>20</sup> government must begin by maintaining them. Here the road to economy lies not through receipt, but through expense ; and in that country nature has given no short cut to your object. Men must propagate, like other animals, by the month. Never did oppression light the nuptial torch ; never did extortion and usury spread out the genial bed. Does any one of you think that England, so wasted, would, under such a nursing attendance, so rapidly and cheaply recover ? But he is meanly acquainted with either England or India who does not know that <sup>30</sup> England would a thousand times sooner resume population, fertility, and what ought to be the ultimate secretion from both, revenue, than such a country as the Carnatic.

The Carnatic is not by the bounty of nature a fertile soil. The general size of its cattle is proof enough that

it is much otherwise. It is some days since I moved that a curious and interesting map, kept in the India House, should be laid before you.<sup>1</sup> The India House is not yet in readiness to send it ; I have therefore brought down my own copy, and there it lies for the use of any gentleman who may think such a matter worthy of his attention. It is indeed a noble map, and of noble things ; but it is decisive against the golden dreams and sanguine speculations of avarice run mad. In addition to what you know must be the case in every part of the world (the necessity of a previous provision of habitation, seed, stock, capital), that map will show you that the uses of the influences of Heaven itself are in that country a work of art. The Carnatic is refreshed by few or no living brooks or running streams, and it has rain only at one season ; but its product of rice exacts the use of water subject to perpetual command. This is the national bank of the Carnatic, on which it must have a perpetual credit, or it perishes irretrievably. For that reason, in the happier times of India, a number, almost incredible, of reservoirs have been made in chosen places throughout the whole country ; they are formed for the greater part of mounds of earth and stones, with sluices of solid masonry ; the whole constructed with admirable skill and labour, and maintained at a mighty charge. In the territory contained in that map alone, I have been at the trouble of reckoning the reservoirs, and they amount to upwards of eleven hundred, from the extent of two or three acres to five miles in circuit. From these reservoirs currents are occasionally drawn over the fields, and these watercourses again call for a considerable expense to keep them properly scoured and duly levelled. Taking the district in that map as a measure, there cannot be in the Carnatic and Tanjore fewer than ten thousand of these reservoirs of the larger

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Barnard's map of the Jaghire.

and middling dimensions, to say nothing of those for domestic services and the uses of religious purification. These are not the enterprises of your power, nor in a style of magnificence suited to the taste of your minister. These are the monuments of real kings, who were the fathers of their people ; testators to a posterity which they embraced as their own. These are the grand sepulchres built by ambition ; but by the ambition of an insatiable benevolence, which, not contented with reigning in the dispensation of happiness during the contracted term of human life, had strained, with all the reachings and graspings of a vivacious mind, to extend the dominion of their bounty beyond the limits of nature, and to perpetuate themselves through generations of generations, the guardians, the protectors, the nourishers of mankind.

Long before the late invasion, the persons who are the objects of the grant of public money now before you had so diverted the supply of the pious funds of culture and population that everywhere the reservoirs were fallen into a miserable decay. But after those domestic enemies had provoked the entry of a cruel foreign foe into the country, he did not leave it until his revenge had completed the destruction begun by their avarice. Few, very few indeed, of these magazines of water that are not either totally destroyed, or cut through with such gaps as to require a serious attention and much cost to re-establish them, as the means of present subsistence to the people and of future revenue to the state.

What, sir, would a virtuous and enlightened ministry do on the view of the ruins of such works before them ?— on the view of such a chasm of desolation as that which yawned in the midst of those countries to the north and south which still bore some vestiges of cultivation ? They would have reduced all their most necessary establishments ; they would have suspended the justest pay-

ments ; they would have employed every shilling derived from the producing, to reanimate the powers of the unproductive parts. While they were performing this fundamental duty, whilst they were celebrating these mysteries of justice and humanity, they would have told the corps of fictitious creditors, whose crimes were their claims, that they must keep an awful distance ; that they must silence their inauspicious tongues ; that they must hold off their profane, unhallowed paws from this holy <sup>10</sup> work ; they would have proclaimed with a voice that should make itself heard that on every country the first creditor is the plough ; that this original, indefeasible claim supersedes every other demand.

That is what a wise and virtuous ministry would have done and said. This, therefore, is what our minister could never think of saying or doing. A ministry of another kind would have first improved the country, and have thus laid a solid foundation for future opulence and future force. But on this grand point of the restoration <sup>20</sup> of the country there is not one syllable to be found in the correspondence of our ministers, from the first to the last ; they felt nothing for a land desolated by fire, sword, and famine ; their sympathies took another direction ; they were touched with pity for bribery, so long tormented with a fruitless itching of its palms ; their bowels yearned for usury, that had long missed the harvest of its returning months<sup>1</sup> ; they felt for peculation, which had been for so many years raking in the dust of an empty treasury ; they were melted into compassion for rapine and oppression, licking their dry, parched, unbloody jaws. These <sup>30</sup> were the objects of their solicitude. These were the necessities for which they were studious to provide.

<sup>1</sup> Interest is rated in India by the month.

*Charles James Fox, Benefactor of Nations*

(From the Speech on the East India Bill, December 1783.)

AND now, having done my duty to the bill, let me say a word to the author. I should leave him to his own noble sentiments, if the unworthy and illiberal language with which he has been treated, beyond all example of parliamentary liberty, did not make a few words necessary; not so much in justice to him, as to my own feelings. I must say, then, that it will be a distinction honourable to the age that the rescue of the greatest number of the human race that ever were so grievously oppressed from the greatest tyranny that was ever exercised has fallen to 10 the lot of abilities and dispositions equal to the task; that it has fallen to one who has the enlargement to comprehend, the spirit to undertake, and the eloquence to support so great a measure of hazardous benevolence. His spirit is not owing to his ignorance of the state of men and things; he well knows what snares are spread about his path, from personal animosity, from court intrigues, and possibly from popular delusion. But he has put to hazard his ease, his security, his interest, his power, even his darling popularity, for the benefit of a people whom he 20 has never seen. This is the road that all heroes have trod before him. He is traduced and abused for his supposed motives. He will remember that obloquy is a necessary ingredient in the composition of all true glory: he will remember that it was not only in the Roman customs, but it is in the nature and constitution of things, that calumny and abuse are essential parts of triumph. These thoughts will support a mind which only exists for honour under the burden of temporary reproach. He is doing indeed a great good; such as rarely falls to the 30 lot, and almost as rarely coincides with the desires, of any man. Let him use his time. Let him give the whole

length of the reins to his benevolence. He is now on a great eminence, where the eyes of mankind are turned to him. He may live long, he may do much. But here is the summit. He never can exceed what he does this day

He has faults ; but they are faults that, though they may in a small degree tarnish the lustre, and sometimes impede the march of his abilities, have nothing in them to extinguish the fire of so great virtues. In those faults, there is no mixture of deceit, of hypocrisy, of pride, of <sup>10</sup> ferocity, of complexional despotism, or want of feeling for the distresses of mankind. His are faults which might exist in a descendant of Henry the Fourth of France, as they did exist in that father of his country. Henry the Fourth wished that he might live to see a fowl in the pot of every peasant in his kingdom. That sentiment of homely benevolence was worth all the splendid sayings that are recorded of kings. But he wished perhaps for more than could be obtained, and the goodness of the man exceeded the power of the king. But this gentleman, <sup>20</sup> a subject, may this day say this at least, with truth, that he secures the rice in his pot to every man in India. A poet of antiquity thought it one of the first distinctions to a prince whom he meant to celebrate that through a long succession of generations he had been the progenitor of an able and virtuous citizen, who by force of the arts of peace had corrected governments of oppression, and suppressed wars of rapine.

Indole proh quanta iuvenis, quantumque daturus  
 Ausoniae populis ventura in saecula civem.  
 Ille super Gangem, super exauditus et Indos,  
<sup>30</sup> implebit terras voce ; et furialia bella  
 fulmine compescet linguae.—

This was what was said of the predecessor of the only person to whose eloquence it does not wrong that of the mover of this bill to be compared. But the Ganges and the

Indus are the patrimony of the fame of my honourable friend, and not of Cicero. I confess, I anticipate with joy the reward of those whose whole consequence, power, and authority, exist only for the benefit of mankind ; and I carry my mind to all the people, and all the names and descriptions that, relieved by this bill, will bless the labours of this parliament and the confidence which the best House of Commons has given to him who the best deserves it. The little cavils of party will not be heard where freedom and happiness will be felt. There is not 10 a tongue, a nation, or religion in India which will not bless the presiding care and manly beneficence of this House, and of him who proposes to you this great work. Your names will never be separated before the throne of the Divine Goodness, in whatever language, or with whatever rites, pardon is asked for sin, and reward for those who imitate the Godhead in His universal bounty to His creatures. These honours you deserve, and they will surely be paid, when all the jargon of influence, and party, and patronage are swept into oblivion. 20

I have spoken what I think, and what I feel, of the mover of this bill. An honourable friend of mine, speaking of his merits, was charged with having made a studied panegyric. I don't know what his was. Mine, I am sure, is a studied panegyric ; the fruit of much meditation ; the result of the observation of near twenty years. For my own part, I am happy that I have lived to see this day ; I feel myself overpaid for the labours of eighteen years when, at this late period, I am able to take my share, by one humble vote, in destroying a tyranny that exists 30 to the disgrace of this nation and the destruction of so large a part of the human species.

## THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

*Its Principal Agents: (a) Lawyers*(From *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, 1790.)

JUDGE, sir, of my surprise, when I found that a very great proportion of the assembly (a majority, I believe, of the members who attended) was composed of practitioners in the law. It was composed, not of distinguished magistrates, who had given pledges to their country of their science, prudence, and integrity; not of leading advocates, the glory of the bar; not of renowned professors in universities;—but for the far greater part, as it must in such a number, of the inferior, unlearned, 10 mechanical, merely instrumental members of the profession. There were distinguished exceptions; but the general composition was of obscure provincial advocates, of stewards of petty local jurisdictions, country attorneys, notaries, and the whole train of the ministers of municipal litigation, the fomenters and conductors of the petty war of village vexation. From the moment I read the list I saw distinctly, and very nearly as it has happened, all that was to follow. . . .

Whenever the supreme authority is vested in a body 20 so composed, it must evidently produce the consequence of supreme authority placed in the hands of men not taught habitually to respect themselves; who had no previous fortune in character at stake; who could not be expected to bear with moderation, or to conduct with discretion, a power which they themselves, more than any others, must be surprised to find in their hands. Who could flatter himself that these men, suddenly and, as it were, by enchantment, snatched from the humblest rank of subordination, would not be intoxicated with their

unprepared greatness? Who could conceive that men who are habitually meddling, daring, subtle, active, of litigious dispositions and unquiet minds, would easily fall back into their old condition of obscure contention and laborious, low, and unprofitable chicane?

(b) *The Monied Men*

(From the same.)

By the vast debt of France a great monied interest has insensibly grown up, and with it a great power. By the ancient usages which prevailed in that kingdom the general circulation of property, and in particular the mutual convertibility of land into money, and of money <sup>10</sup> into land, had always been a matter of difficulty. Family settlements, rather more general and more strict than they are in England, the *ius retractus*, the great mass of landed property held by the crown and, by a maxim of the French law, held unalienably, the vast estates of the ecclesiastic corporations,—all these had kept the landed and monied interests more separated in France, less miscible, and the owners of the two distinct species of property not so well disposed to each other as they are in this country. . . .

20

In this state of real, though not always perceived, warfare between the noble ancient landed interest and the new monied interest the greatest, because the most applicable, strength was in the hands of the latter. The monied interest is in its nature more ready for any adventure; and its possessors more disposed to new enterprises of any kind. Being of a recent acquisition it falls in more naturally with any novelties. It is therefore the kind of wealth which will be resorted to by all who wish for change.

30

(c) *Men of Letters*

(From the same.)

ALONG with the monied interest, a new description of men had grown up, with whom that interest soon formed a close and marked union; I mean the political men of letters. . . .

The literary cabal had some years ago formed something like a regular plan for the destruction of the Christian religion. This object they pursued with a degree of zeal which hitherto had been discovered only in the propagators of some system of piety. . . .

10 These writers, like the propagators of all novelties, pretended to a great zeal for the poor and the lower orders, whilst in their satires they rendered hateful, by every exaggeration, the faults of courts, of nobility, and of priesthood. They became a sort of demagogues. They served as a link to unite, in favour of one object, obnoxious wealth to restless and desperate poverty.

The paradoxes of eloquent writers, brought forth purely as a sport of fancy, to try their talents, to rouse attention, and excite surprise, are taken up by these gentlemen, not 20 in the spirit of the original authors, as means of cultivating their taste and improving their style. These paradoxes become with them serious grounds of action, upon which they proceed in regulating the most important concerns of the state. Cicero ludicrously describes Cato as endeavouring to act in the commonwealth upon the school paradoxes which exercised the wits of the junior students in the Stoic philosophy. If this was true of Cato, these gentlemen copy after him in the manner of some persons who lived about his time—*pede nudo Catonem*. Mr. Hume 30 told me that he had from Rousseau himself the secret of his principles of composition. That acute, though eccentric, observer had perceived that to strike and

interest the public, the marvellous must be produced ; that the marvellous of the heathen mythology had long since lost its effects ; that giants, magicians, fairies, and heroes of romance, which succeeded, had exhausted the portion of credulity which belonged to their age ; that now nothing was left to a writer but that species of the marvellous which might still be produced, and with as great an effect as ever, though in another way ; that is, the marvellous in life, in manners, in characters, and in extraordinary situations, giving rise to new and unlooked for strokes in politics and morals.

(d) *Renegade Nobles*

(From the same.)

To observing men it must have appeared from the beginning that the majority of the third estate, in conjunction with such a deputation from the clergy as I have described, whilst it pursued the destruction of the nobility, would inevitably become subservient to the worst designs of individuals in that class. In the spoil and humiliation of their own order these individuals would possess a sure fund for the pay of their new followers. To squander away the objects which made the happiness of their <sup>20</sup> fellows would be to them no sacrifice at all. Turbulent, discontented men of quality, in proportion as they are puffed up with personal pride and arrogance, generally despise their own order. One of the first symptoms they discover of a selfish and mischievous ambition is a profligate disregard of a dignity which they partake with others. To be attached to the subdivision, to love the little platoon we belong to in society, is the first principle (the germ as it were) of public affections. It is the first link in the series by which we proceed towards a love to our country and to <sup>30</sup> mankind. The interest of that portion of social arrangement is a trust in the hands of all those who compose it ;

and as none but bad men would justify it in abuse, none but traitors would barter it away for their own personal advantage.

### *Moral Insensibility*

(From the same.)

WHEN men of rank sacrifice all ideas of dignity to an ambition without a distinct object, and work with low instruments and for low ends, the whole composition becomes low and base. Does not something like this now appear in France? Does it not produce something ignoble and inglorious? a kind of meanness in all the prevalent policy? a tendency in all that is done to lower along with individuals all the dignity and importance of the state? Other revolutions have been conducted by persons, who, whilst they attempted or affected changes in the commonwealth, sanctified their ambition by advancing the dignity of the people whose peace they troubled. They had long views. They aimed at the rule, not at the destruction of their country. They were men of great civil, and great military talents, and if the terror, the ornament of their age. They were not like Jew brokers contending with each other who could best remedy with fraudulent circulation and depreciated paper the wretchedness and ruin brought on their country by their degenerate councils. The compliment made to one of the great bad men of the old stamp (Cromwell) by his kinsman, a favourite poet of that time, shows what it was he proposed, and what indeed to a great degree he accomplished in the success of his ambition:

Still as *you* rise, the *state* exalted too,  
Finds no distemper whilst 'tis changed by *you*;  
30 Changed like the world's great scene, when without noise  
The rising sun night's *vulgar* lights destroys.

These disturbers were not so much like men usurping

power as asserting their natural place in society. Their rising was to illuminate and beautify the world. Their conquest over their competitors was by outshining them. The hand that, like a destroying angel, smote the country, communicated to it the force and energy under which it suffered. I do not say (God forbid), I do not say that the virtues of such men were to be taken as a balance to their crimes: but they were some corrective to their effects. Such was, as I said, our Cromwell. Such were your whole race of Guises, Condés, and Colignis. Such the Richelieus, <sup>10</sup> who in more quiet times acted in the spirit of a civil war. Such, as better men, and in a less dubious cause, were your Henry IV and your Sully, though nursed in civil confusions, and not wholly without some of their taint. It is a thing to be wondered at, to see how very soon France, when she had a moment to respire, recovered and emerged from the longest and most dreadful civil war that ever was known in any nation. Why? Because, among all their massacres, they had not slain the *mind* in their country. A conscious dignity, a noble pride, a generous <sup>20</sup> sense of glory and emulation, was not extinguished. On the contrary, it was kindled and inflamed. The organs also of the state, however shattered, existed. All the prizes of honour and virtue, all the rewards, all the distinctions remained. But your present confusion, like a palsy, has attacked the fountain of life itself.

*October 6, 1789*

(From the same.)

IT is now sixteen or seventeen years since I saw the Queen of France, then the dauphiness, at Versailles; and surely never lighted on this orb, which she hardly seemed to touch, a more delightful vision. I saw her just <sup>30</sup> above the horizon, decorating and cheering the elevated sphere she just began to move in,—glittering like the

morning-star, full of life, and splendour, and joy. Oh ! what a revolution ! and what a heart I must have to contemplate without emotion that elevation and that fall ! Little did I dream, when she added titles of veneration to those of enthusiastic, distant, respectful love, that she should ever be obliged to carry the sharp antidote against disgrace concealed in that bosom ; little did I dream that I should have lived to see such disasters fallen upon her in a nation of gallant men, in a nation of men of honour, and of cavaliers. I thought ten thousand swords must have leaped from their scabbards to avenge even a look that threatened her with insult. But the age of chivalry is gone. That of sophisters, economists, and calculators has succeeded ; and the glory of Europe is extinguished for ever. Never, never more, shall we behold that generous loyalty to rank and sex, that proud submission, that dignified obedience, that subordination of the heart, which kept alive, even in servitude itself, the spirit of an exalted freedom. The unbought grace of life, the cheap defence of nations, the nurse of manly sentiment and heroic enterprise is gone ! It is gone, that sensibility of principle, that chastity of honour, which felt a stain like a wound, which inspired courage whilst it mitigated ferocity, which ennobled whatever it touched, and under which vice itself lost half its evil by losing all its grossness. . . .

Why do I feel so differently from the Reverend Dr. Price, and those of his lay flock who will choose to adopt the sentiments of his discourse ?—For this plain reason—because it is *natural* I should ; because we are so made, as to be affected at such spectacles with melancholy sentiments upon the unstable condition of mortal prosperity ; and the tremendous uncertainty of human greatness ; because in those natural feelings we learn great lessons ; because in events like these our passions instruct our reason ; because when kings are hurled from their thrones

by the Supreme Director of this great drama, and become the objects of insult to the base, and of pity to the good, we behold such disasters in the moral, as we should behold a miracle in the physical order of things. We are alarmed into reflection ; our minds (as it has long since been observed) are purified by terror and pity ; our weak, unthinking pride is humbled under the dispensations of a mysterious wisdom. Some tears might be drawn from me, if such a spectacle were exhibited on the stage. I should be truly ashamed of finding in myself that superficial, <sup>10</sup> theatric sense of painted distress whilst I could exult over it in real life. With such a perverted mind I could never venture to show my face at a tragedy. People would think the tears that Garrick formerly, or that Siddons not long since, have extorted from me were the tears of hypocrisy ; I should know them to be the tears of folly.

### *Cromwell,—a Contrast*

(From *A Letter to a Member of the National Assembly*, 1791.)

NOTHING seems to me to render your internal situation more desperate than this one circumstance of the state of your judicature. Many days are not passed since we have seen a set of men brought forth by your rulers for a most <sup>20</sup> critical function. Your rulers brought forth a set of men, steaming from the sweat and drudgery, and all black with the smoke and soot of the forge of confiscation and robbery—*ardentis massae fuligine lippos*, a set of men brought forth from the trade of hammering arms of proof, offensive and defensive, in aid of the enterprises, and for the subsequent protection of housebreakers, murderers, traitors, and malefactors ; men who had their minds seasoned with theories perfectly conformable to their practice, and who had always laughed at possession and <sup>30</sup> prescription, and defied all the fundamental maxims of jurisprudence. . . .

Cromwell, when he attempted to legalize his power, and to settle his conquered country in a state of order, did not look for dispensers of justice in the instruments of his usurpation. Quite the contrary. He sought out, with great solicitude and selection, and even from the party most opposite to his designs, men of weight and decorum of character; men unstained with the violence of the times, and with hands not fouled with confiscation and sacrilege: for he chose an *Hale* for his chief justice, 10 though he absolutely refused to take his civic oaths, or to make any acknowledgement whatsoever of the legality of his government. Cromwell told this great lawyer that since he did not approve his title, all he required of him was to administer, in a manner agreeable to his pure sentiments and unspotted character, that justice without which human society cannot subsist: that it was not his particular government, but civil order itself, which, as a judge, he wished him to support. Cromwell knew how to separate the institutions expedient to his usurpation 20 from the administration of the public justice of his country. For Cromwell was a man in whom ambition had not wholly suppressed, but only suspended the sentiments of religion and the love (as far as it could consist with his designs) of fair and honourable reputation. Accordingly, we are indebted to this act of his for the preservation of our laws, which some senseless assertors of the rights of men were then on the point of entirely erasing, as relics of 30 feudalism and barbarism. Besides, he gave in the appointment of that man, to that age and to all posterity the most brilliant example of sincere and fervent piety, exact justice, and profound jurisprudence.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See Burnet's *Life of Hale*.

*Political Shallowness*

(From *Reflections on the Revolution in France.*)

I AM convinced that there are men of considerable parts among the popular leaders in the National Assembly. Some of them display eloquence in their speeches and their writings. This cannot be without powerful and cultivated talents. But eloquence may exist without a proportionable degree of wisdom. When I speak of ability, I am obliged to distinguish. What they have done towards the support of their system bespeaks no ordinary men. In the system itself, taken as the scheme of a republic constructed for procuring the prosperity and security of the citizen, and 10 for promoting the strength and grandeur of the state, I confess myself unable to find out anything which displays, in a single instance, the work of a comprehensive and disposing mind, or even the provisions of a vulgar prudence. Their purpose everywhere seems to have been to evade and slip aside from *difficulty*. This it has been the glory of the great masters in all the arts to confront and to overcome; and when they had overcome the first difficulty, to turn it into an instrument for new conquests over new difficulties; thus to enable them to extend the empire 20 of their science; and even to push forward, beyond the reach of their original thoughts, the landmarks of the human understanding itself. Difficulty is a severe instructor, set over us by the supreme ordinance of a parental guardian and legislator, who knows us better than we know ourselves, as he loves us better too. *Pater ipse colendi haud facilem esse viam voluit.* He that wrestles with us strengthens our nerves, and sharpens our skill. Our antagonist is our helper. This amicable conflict with difficulty obliges us to an intimate acquaintance with our 30 object, and compels us to consider it in all its relations. It will not suffer us to be superficial. It is the want of

nerves or understanding for such a task, it is the degenerate fondness for tricking short-cuts, and little fallacious facilities, that has in so many parts of the world created governments with arbitrary powers. They have created the late arbitrary monarchy of France. They have created the arbitrary republic of Paris. With them defects in wisdom are to be supplied by the plenitude of force. They get nothing by it. Commencing their labours on a principle of sloth, they have the common fortune of slothful men.

10 The difficulties, which they rather had eluded than escaped, meet them again in their course; they multiply and thicken on them; they are involved, through a labyrinth of confused detail, in an industry without limit, and without direction; and, in conclusion, the whole of their work becomes feeble, vicious, and insecure.

It is this inability to wrestle with difficulty which has obliged the arbitrary assembly of France to commence their schemes of reform with abolition and total destruction.<sup>1</sup> But is it in destroying and pulling down that skill 20 is displayed? Your mob can do this as well at least as your assemblies. The shallowest understanding, the rudest hand, is more than equal to that task. Rage and frenzy will pull down more in half an hour than prudence, deliberation, and foresight can build up in a hundred years.

<sup>1</sup> A leading member of the assembly, M. Rabaud de St. Etienne, has expressed the principle of all their proceedings as clearly as possible—Nothing can be more simple: ‘*Tous les établissements en France couronnent le malheur du peuple, pour le rendre heureux il faut le renouveler; changer ses idées; changer ses lois; changer ses mœurs; . . . changer les hommes; changer les choses; changer les mots . . . tout détruire; oui, tout détruire; puisque tout est à recréer.*’ This gentleman was chosen president in an assembly not sitting at *Quinze-vingt*, or the *Petites Maisons*; and composed of persons giving themselves out to be rational beings; but neither his ideas, language, or conduct, differ in the smallest degree from the discourses, opinions, and actions of those within and without the assembly who direct the operations of the machine now at work in France.

The errors and defects of old establishments are visible and palpable. It calls for little ability to point them out ; and, where absolute power is given, it requires but a word wholly to abolish the vice and the establishment together. The same lazy but restless disposition, which loves sloth and hates quiet, directs these politicians when they come to work for supplying the place of what they have destroyed. To make everything the reverse of what they have seen is quite as easy as to destroy. No difficulties occur in what has never been tried. Criticism is almost 10 baffled in discovering the defects of what has not existed ; and eager enthusiasm and cheating hope have all the wide field of imagination in which they may expatiate with little or no opposition.

At once to preserve and to reform is quite another thing.

### *A Prophecy*

(From the same.)

IT is besides to be considered whether an assembly like yours, even supposing that it was in possession of another sort of organ through which its orders were to pass, is fit for promoting the obedience and discipline 20 of an army. It is known that armies have hitherto yielded a very precarious and uncertain obedience to any senate, or popular authority ; and they will least of all yield it to an assembly which is only to have a continuance of two years. The officers must totally lose the characteristic disposition of military men if they see with perfect submission and due admiration the dominion of pleaders ; especially when they find that they have a new court to pay to an endless succession of those pleaders ; whose military policy, and the genius of whose command (if they 30 should have any), must be as uncertain as their duration is transient. In the weakness of one kind of authority,

and in the fluctuation of all, the officers of an army will remain for some time mutinous and full of faction, until some popular general, who understands the art of conciliating the soldiery, and who possesses the true spirit of command, shall draw the eyes of all men upon himself. Armies will obey him on his personal account. There is no other way of securing military obedience in this state of things. But the moment in which that event shall happen, the person who really commands the army is ~~to~~ your master; the master (that is little) of your king, the master of your assembly, the master of your whole republic.

*On Natural Rights*

(From the same.)

FAR am I from denying in theory, full as far is my heart from withholding in practice (if I were of power to give or to withhold), the *real* rights of men. In denying their false claims of right I do not mean to injure those which are real, and are such as their pretended rights would totally destroy. If civil society be made for the advantage of man, all the advantages for which it is made ~~20~~ become his right. It is an institution of beneficence; and law itself is only beneficence, acting by a rule. Men have a right to live by that rule; they have a right to justice, as between their fellows, whether their fellows are in politic function or in ordinary occupation. They have a right to the fruits of their industry; and to the means of making their industry fruitful. They have a right to the acquisitions of their parents; to the nourishment and improvement of their offspring; to instruction in life, and to consolation in death. Whatever each man ~~30~~ can separately do, without trespassing upon others, he has a right to do for himself; and he has a right to a fair portion of all which society, with all its combinations of

skill and force, can do in his favour. In this partnership all men have equal rights ; but not to equal things. He that has but five shillings in the partnership has as good a right to it as he that has five hundred pounds has to his larger proportion. But he has not a right to an equal dividend in the product of the joint stock ; and as to the share of power, authority, and direction which each individual ought to have in the management of the state, that I must deny to be amongst the direct original rights of man in civil society ; for I have in my contemplation <sup>10</sup> the civil social man, and no other. It is a thing to be settled by convention. . . .

These metaphysic rights entering into common life, like rays of light which pierce into a dense medium, are, by the laws of nature, refracted from their straight line. Indeed, in the gross and complicated mass of human passions and concerns, the primitive rights of men undergo such a variety of refractions and reflections that it becomes absurd to talk of them as if they continued in the simplicity of their original direction. The nature of man is intricate ; <sup>20</sup> the objects of society are of the greatest possible complexity : and therefore no simple disposition or direction of power can be suitable either to man's nature or to the quality of his affairs. When I hear the simplicity of contrivance aimed at and boasted of in any new political constitutions, I am at no loss to decide that the artificers are grossly ignorant of their trade, or totally negligent of their duty. The simple governments are fundamentally defective, to say no worse of them.

*On the Social Contract*

(From the same.)

SOCIETY is indeed a contract. Subordinate contracts <sup>30</sup> for objects of mere occasional interest may be dissolved at pleasure—but the state ought not to be considered

nothing better than a partnership agreement in a trade of pepper and coffee, calico or tobacco, or some other such low concern, to be taken up for a little temporary interest, and to be dissolved by the fancy of the parties. It is to be looked on with other reverence ; because it is not a partnership in things subservient only to the gross animal existence of a temporary and perishable nature. It is a partnership in all science ; a partnership in all art ; a partnership in every virtue, and in all perfection. As 10 the ends of such a partnership cannot be obtained in many generations, it becomes a partnership not only between those who are living, but between those who are living, those who are dead, and those who are to be born. Each contract of each particular state is but a clause in the great primaeval contract of eternal society, linking the lower with the higher natures, connecting the visible and invisible world, according to a fixed compact sanctioned by the inviolable oath which holds all physical and all moral natures, each in their appointed place.

This law is not subject to the will of those who by an obligation above them, and infinitely superior, are bound to submit their will to that law. The municipal corporations of that universal kingdom are not morally at liberty at their pleasure, and on their speculations of a contingent improvement, wholly to separate and tear asunder the bands of their subordinate community, and to dissolve it into an unsocial, uncivil, unconnected chaos of elementary principles. It is the first and supreme necessity only, a necessity that is not chosen, but chooses, a necessity 20 paramount to deliberation, that admits no discussion, and demands no evidence, which alone can justify a resort to anarchy. This necessity is no exception to the rule ; because this necessity itself is a part too of that moral and physical disposition of things to which man must be obedient by consent of force : but if that which is only 30

submission to necessity should be made the object of choice, the law is broken, nature is disobeyed, and the rebellious are outlawed, cast forth, and exiled from this world of reason, and order, and peace, and virtue, and fruitful penitence, into the antagonist world of madness, discord, vice, confusion, and unavailing sorrow.

*Man's Rights and Duties not in his own hand*

(From *An Appeal from the New to the Old Whigs*, 1791.)

TAKING it for granted that I do not write to the disciples of the Parisian philosophy, I may assume that the awful Author of our being is the Author of our place in the order of existence ; and that having disposed and marshalled us <sup>10</sup> by a divine tactic, not according to our will, but according to His, He has, in and by that disposition, virtually subjected us to act the part which belongs to the place assigned us. We have obligations to mankind at large, which are not in consequence of any special voluntary pact. They arise from the relation of man to man, and the relation of man to God, which relations are not matters of choice. On the contrary, the force of all the pacts which we enter into with any particular person, or number of persons, amongst mankind depends upon those prior obligations. <sup>20</sup> In some cases the subordinate relations are voluntary, in others they are necessary—but the duties are all compulsive. When we marry, the choice is voluntary, but the duties are not matter of choice. They are dictated by the nature of the situation. Dark and inscrutable are the ways by which we come into the world. The instincts which give rise to this mysterious process of nature are not of our making. But out of physical causes, unknown to us, perhaps unknowable, arise moral duties which, as we are able perfectly to comprehend, we are bound indispensably to perform. <sup>30</sup> Parents may not be consenting to their moral relation ; but consenting or not, they are

bound to a long train of burdensome duties towards those with whom they have never made a convention of any sort. Children are not consenting to their relation, but their relation, without their actual consent, binds them to its duties; or rather it implies their consent, because the presumed consent of every rational creature is in unison with the predisposed order of things. Men come in that manner into a community with the social state of their parents, endowed with all the benefits, loaded with all <sup>10</sup> the duties of their situation. If the social ties and ligaments, spun out of those physical relations which are the elements of the commonwealth, in most cases begin, and alway continue, independently of our will, so, without any stipulation on our own part, are we bound by that relation called our country, which comprehends (as it has been well said) 'all the charities of all'.<sup>1</sup>

*On the People*

(From the same.)

As in the abstract, it is perfectly clear that, out of a state of civil society, majority and minority are relations which can have no existence; and that, in civil society, <sup>20</sup> its own specific conventions in each corporation determine what it is that constitutes the people, so as to make their act the signification of the general will: to come to particulars, it is equally clear that neither in France nor in England has the original, or any subsequent compact of the state, expressed or implied, constituted *a majority of men, told by the head*, to be the acting people of their several communities. . . .

A true natural aristocracy is not a separate interest in the state, or separable from it. It is an essential <sup>30</sup> integrant part of any large body rightly constituted. It is formed out of a class of legitimate presumptions, <sup>1</sup> Omnes omnium charitates patria una complectitur. Cic.

which, taken as generalities, must be admitted for actual truths. To be bred in a place of estimation ; to see nothing low and sordid from one's infancy ; to be taught to respect one's self ; to be habituated to the censorial inspection of the public eye ; to look early to public opinion ; to stand upon such elevated ground as to be enabled to take a large view of the widespread and infinitely diversified combinations of men and affairs in a large society ; to have leisure to read, to reflect, to converse ; to be enabled to draw the court and attention of the wise <sup>10</sup> and learned wherever they are to be found ;—to be habituated in armies to command and to obey ; to be taught to despise danger in the pursuit of honour and duty ; to be formed to the greatest degree of vigilance, foresight, and circumspection, in a state of things in which no fault is committed with impunity, and the slightest mistakes draw on the most ruinous consequences ;—to be led to a guarded and regulated conduct, from a sense that you are considered as an instructor of your fellow-citizens in their highest concerns, and that you act as <sup>20</sup> a reconciler between God and man ;—to be employed as an administrator of law and justice, and to be thereby amongst the first benefactors to mankind ;—to be a professor of high science, or of liberal and ingenuous art ;—to be amongst rich traders, who from their success are presumed to have sharp and vigorous understandings, and to possess the virtues of diligence, order, constancy, and regularity, and to have cultivated an habitual regard to commutative justice—these are the circumstances of men that form what I should call a *natural* aristocracy, without <sup>30</sup> which there is no nation.

The state of civil society, which necessarily generates this aristocracy, is a state of nature ; and much more truly so than a savage and incoherent mode of life. For man is by nature reasonable ; and he is never perfectly in

his natural state but when he is placed where reason may be best cultivated, and most predominates. Art is man's nature. We are as much, at least, in a state of nature in formed manhood as in immature and helpless infancy. Men qualified in the manner I have just described form in nature, as she operates in the common modification of society, the leading, guiding, and governing part. It is the soul to the body, without which the man does not exist. To give therefore no more importance, in the social <sup>10</sup> order, to such descriptions of men than that of so many units is a horrible usurpation.

When great multitudes act together, under that discipline of nature, I recognize the PEOPLE.

*The Note of the British Constitution*

(From *Reflections on the Revolution in France*.)

You will observe that, from Magna Charta to the Declaration of Right, it has been the uniform policy of our constitution to claim and assert our liberties, as an *entailed inheritance* derived to us from our forefathers, and to be transmitted to our posterity; as an estate specially belonging to the people of this kingdom, without <sup>20</sup> any reference whatever to any other more general or prior right. By this means our constitution preserves a unity in so great a diversity of its parts. We have an inheritable crown; an inheritable peerage; and a House of Commons and a people inheriting privileges, franchises, and liberties, from a long line of ancestors.

The policy appears to me to be the result of profound reflection; or rather the happy effect of following nature, which is wisdom without reflection, and above it. A spirit of innovation is generally the result of a selfish temper <sup>30</sup> and confined views. People will not look forward to posterity who never look backward to their ancestors. Besides, the people of England well know that the idea of

inheritance furnishes a sure principle of conservation, and a sure principle of transmission ; without at all excluding a principle of improvement. It leaves acquisition free ; but it secures what it acquires. Whatever advantages are obtained by a state proceeding on these maxims are locked fast as in a sort of family settlement ; grasped as in a kind of mortmain for ever. By a constitutional policy working after the pattern of nature we receive, we hold, we transmit our government and our privileges in the same manner in which we enjoy and transmit our property and our lives. 10 The institutions of policy, the goods of fortune, the gifts of Providence are handed down to us, and from us, in the same course and order. Our political system is placed in a just correspondence and symmetry with the order of the world, and with the mode of existence decreed to a permanent body composed of transitory parts ; wherein, by the disposition of a stupendous wisdom, moulding together the great mysterious incorporation of the human race, the whole, at one time, is never old, or middle-aged, or young, but, in a condition of unchangeable constancy, 20 moves on through the varied tenor of perpetual decay, fall, renovation, and progression. Thus, by preserving the method of nature in the conduct of the state, in what we improve we are never wholly new ; in what we retain we are never wholly obsolete. By adhering in this manner and on those principles to our forefathers we are guided not by the superstition of antiquarians, but by the spirit of philosophic analogy. In this choice of inheritance we have given to our frame of polity the image of a relation in blood ; binding up the constitution of our country with our dearest 30 domestic ties ; adopting our fundamental laws into the bosom of our family affections ; keeping inseparable and cherishing with the warmth of all their combined and mutually reflected charities our state, our hearths, our sepulchres, and our altars.

Through the same plan of a conformity to nature in our artificial institutions, and by calling in the aid of her unerring and powerful instincts, to fortify the fallible and feeble contrivances of our reason, we have derived several other, and those no small benefits from considering our liberties in the light of an inheritance. Always acting as if in the presence of canonized forefathers, the spirit of freedom, leading in itself to misrule and excess, is tempered with an awful gravity. This idea **10** of a liberal descent inspires us with a sense of habitual native dignity, which prevents that upstart insolence almost inevitably adhering to and disgracing those who are the first acquirers of any distinction. By this means our liberty becomes a noble freedom. It carries an imposing and majestic aspect. It has a pedigree and illustrating ancestors. It has its bearings and its ensigns armorial. It has its gallery of portraits; its monumental inscriptions; its records, evidences, and titles. We procure reverence to our civil institutions on the principle **20** upon which nature teaches us to revere individual men; on account of their age, and on account of those from whom they are descended. All your sophisters cannot produce anything better adapted to preserve a rational and manly freedom than the course that we have pursued, who have chosen our nature rather than our speculations, our breasts rather than our inventions, for the great conservatories and magazines of our rights and privileges.

*The Union of State and Church*

(From the same.)

PERSUADED that all things ought to be done with reference, and referring all to the point of reference to **30** which all should be directed, they [i.e. the people of this kingdom] think themselves bound, not only as individuals in the sanctuary of the heart, or as congregated in that

personal capacity, to renew the memory of their high origin and cast ; but also in their corporate character to perform their national homage to the institutor and author and protector of civil society ; without which civil society man could not by any possibility arrive at the perfection of which his nature is capable, nor even make a remote and faint approach to it. They conceive that He who gave our nature to be perfected by our virtue, willed also the necessary means of its perfection. He willed therefore the state ; He willed its connexion with 10 the source and original archetype of all perfection. They who are convinced of this His will, which is the law of laws, and the sovereign of sovereigns, cannot think it reprehensible that this our corporate fealty and homage, that this our recognition of a seigniory paramount, I had almost said this oblation of the state itself, as a worthy offering on the high altar of universal praise, should be performed as all public, solemn acts are performed, in buildings, in music, in decoration, in speech, in the dignity of persons, according to the customs of mankind, taught by their 20 nature ; that is, with modest splendour, with unassuming state, with mild majesty and sober pomp. For those purposes they think some part of the wealth of the country is as usefully employed as it can be in fomenting the luxury of individuals. It is the public ornament. It is the public consolation. It nourishes the public hope. The poorest man finds his own importance and dignity in it, whilst the wealth and pride of individuals at every moment makes the man of humble rank and fortune sensible of his inferiority, and degrades and vilifies his condition. It 30 is for the man in humble life, and to raise his nature and to put him in mind of a state in which the privileges of opulence will cease, when he will be equal by nature, and may be more than equal by virtue, that this portion of the general wealth of his country is employed and sanctified.

*The Testimony of the Wise*(From *An Appeal from the New to the Old Whigs.*)

THE whole scheme of our mixed constitution is to prevent any one of its principles from being carried as far as, taken by itself, and theoretically, it would go. Allow that to be the true policy of the British system, then most of the faults with which that system stands charged will appear to be, not imperfections into which it has inadvertently fallen, but excellences which it has studiously sought. To avoid the perfections of extreme, all its several parts are so constituted as not alone to answer their own 10 several ends, but also each to limit and control the others: insomuch, that—take which of the principles you please—you will find its operation checked and stopped at a certain point. The whole movement stands still rather than that any part should proceed beyond its boundary. From thence it results that in the British constitution there is a perpetual treaty and compromise going on, sometimes openly, sometimes with less observation. To him who contemplates the British constitution, as to him who contemplates the subordinate material world, it will always 20 be a matter of his most curious investigation to discover the secret of this mutual imitation,

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*Finita potestas denique cuique  
quanam sit ratione, atque alte terminus haerens.*

Rational and experienced men tolerably well know, and have always known, how to distinguish between true and false liberty; and between the genuine adherence and the false pretence to what is true. But none, except those who are profoundly studied, can comprehend the elaborate contrivance of a fabric fitted to unite private 30 and public liberty with public force, with order, with peace, with justice, and, above all, with the institutions

formed for bestowing permanence and stability, through ages, upon this invaluable whole.

Place, for instance, before your eyes, such a man as Montesquieu. Think of a genius not born in every country, or every time ; a man gifted by nature with a penetrating, aquiline eye ; with a judgement prepared with the most extensive erudition ; with a herculean robustness of mind, and nerves not to be broken with labour ; a man who could spend twenty years in one pursuit. Think of a man, like the universal patriarch in Milton (who had drawn up 10 before him in his prophetic vision the whole series of the generations which were to issue from his loins), a man capable of placing in review, after having brought together, from the east, the west, the north, and the south, from the coarseness of the rudest barbarism to the most refined and subtle civilization, all the schemes of government which had ever prevailed amongst mankind, weighing, measuring, collating, and comparing them all, joining fact with theory, and calling into council, upon all this infinite assemblage of things, all the speculations which have fatigued the 20 understandings of profound reasoners in all times ! Let us then consider that all these were but so many preparatory steps to qualify a man, and such a man, tinctured with no national prejudice, with no domestic affection, to admire, and to hold out to the admiration of mankind, the constitution of England ! And shall we Englishmen revoke to such a suit ? Shall we, when so much more than he has produced, remains still to be understood and admired, instead of keeping ourselves in the schools of real science, choose for our teachers men incapable of being 30 taught, whose only claim to know is that they have never doubted ; from whom we can learn nothing but their own indocility ; who would teach us to scorn what in the silence of our hearts we ought to adore ?

*The Note of the British Character*(From *Reflections on the French Revolution.*)

I HAVE often been astonished, considering that we are divided from you but by a slender dyke of about twenty-four miles, and that the mutual intercourse between the two countries has lately been very great, to find how little you seem to know of us. I suspect that this is owing to your forming a judgement of this nation from certain publications which do, very erroneously, if they do at all, represent the opinions and dispositions generally prevalent in England. The vanity, restlessness, petulance, and spirit of intrigue, of several petty cabals, who attempt to hide their total want of consequence in bustle and noise and puffing and mutual quotation of each other, makes you imagine that our contemptuous neglect of their abilities is a general mark of acquiescence in their opinions. No such thing, I assure you. Because half a dozen grasshoppers under a fern make the field ring with their importunate chink, whilst thousands of great cattle, reposed beneath the shadow of the British oak, chew the cud and are silent, pray do not imagine that those who make the noise are the only inhabitants of the field ; that of course they are many in number ; or that, after all, they are other than the little, shrivelled, meagre, hopping, though loud and troublesome insects of the hour.

I almost venture to affirm that not one in a hundred amongst us participates in the 'triumph' of the Revolution Society. If the King and Queen of France and their children were to fall into our hands by the chance of war, in the most acrimonious of all hostilities (I deprecate such an event, I deprecate such hostility), they would be treated with another sort of triumphal entry into London. We formerly have had a king of France in that situation ; you have read how he was treated by the victor in the

field ; and in what manner he was afterwards received in England. Four hundred years have gone over us ; but I believe we are not materially changed since that period. Thanks to our sullen resistance to innovation, thanks to the cold sluggishness of our national character, we still bear the stamp of our forefathers. We have not (as I conceive) lost the generosity and dignity of thinking of the fourteenth century ; nor as yet have we subtilized ourselves into savages. We are not the converts of Rousseau ; we are not the disciples of Voltaire ; Helvetius has made 10 no progress amongst us. Atheists are not our preachers ; madmen are not our lawgivers. We know that *we* have made no discoveries ; and we think that no discoveries are to be made, in morality ; nor many in the great principles of government, nor in the ideas of liberty, which were understood long before we were born, altogether as well as they will be after the grave has heaped its mould upon our presumption, and the silent tomb shall have imposed its law on our pert loquacity. In England we have not yet been completely embowelled of our natural 20 entrails : we still feel within us, and we cherish and cultivate, those inbred sentiments which are the faithful guardians, the active monitors of our duty, the true supporters of all liberal and manly morals. We have not been drawn and trussed, in order that we may be filled, like stuffed birds in a museum, with chaff and rags and paltry blurred shreds of paper about the rights of man. We preserve the whole of our feelings still native and entire, unsophisticated by pedantry and infidelity. We have real hearts of flesh and blood beating in our bosoms. 30 We fear God ; we look up with awe to kings ; with affection to parliaments ; with duty to magistrates ; with reverence to priests ; and with respect to nobility.<sup>1</sup> Why ? Because

<sup>1</sup> The English are, I conceive, misrepresented in a letter published in one of the papers, by a gentleman thought to be a dissenting

when such ideas are brought before our minds, it is *natural* to be so affected ; because all other feelings are false and spurious, and tend to corrupt our minds, to vitiate our primary morals, to render us unfit for rational liberty ; and by teaching us a servile, licentious, and abandoned insolence, to be our low sport for a few holidays, to make us perfectly fit for, and justly deserving of, slavery through the whole course of our lives.

You see, sir, that in this enlightened age I am bold enough to confess that we are generally men of untaught feelings ; that, instead of casting away all our old prejudices, we cherish them to a very considerable degree and, to take more shame to ourselves, we cherish them because they are prejudices ; and the longer they have lasted and the more generally they have prevailed, the more we cherish them. We are afraid to put men to live and trade each on his own private stock of reason ; because we suspect that the stock in each man is small, and that the individuals would do better to avail themselves of the general bank and capital of nations and of ages. Many of our men of speculation, instead of exploding general prejudices, employ their sagacity to discover the latent wisdom which prevails in them. If they find what they seek, and they seldom fail, they think it more wise to continue the prejudice, with the reason involved, than to cast away the coat of prejudice, and to leave nothing but the naked reason ; because prejudice, with its reason, has a motive to give action to that reason, and an affection

minister.—When writing to Dr. Price of the spirit which prevails at Paris, he says, ' The spirit of the people in this place has abolished all the proud *distinctions* which the *king* and *nobles* had usurped in their minds ; whether they talk of the *king*, the *noble*, or the *priest*, their whole language is that of the most *enlightened and liberal* amongst the *Eng!ish*.' If this gentleman means to confine the terms *enlightened and liberal* to one set of men in England, it may be true. It is not generally so.

which will give it permanence. Prejudice is of ready application in the emergency ; it previously engages the mind in a steady course of wisdom and virtue, and does not leave the man hesitating in the moment of decision, sceptical, puzzled, and unresolved. Prejudice renders a man's virtue his habit : and not a series of unconnected acts. Through just prejudice, his duty becomes a part of his nature.

*The Revolution to be combated by all Europe*

(From *Letters on a Regicide Peace* : Letter I, 1796.)

THE same discipline which hardens their hearts relaxes their morals. Whilst courts of justice were thrust out by 10 revolutionary tribunals, and silent churches were only the funeral monuments of departed religion, there were no fewer than nineteen or twenty theatres, great and small, most of them kept open at the public expense, and all of them crowded every night. Among the gaunt, haggard forms of famine and nakedness, amidst the yells of murder, the tears of affliction, and the cries of despair, the song, the dance, the mimic scene, the buffoon laughter went on as regularly as in the gay hour of festive peace. I have it from good authority that under the scaffold of judicial 20 murder, and the gaping planks that poured down blood on the spectators, the space was hired out for a show of dancing dogs. I think, without concert, we have made the very same remark on reading some of their pieces, which, being written for other purposes, let us into a view of their social life. It struck us that the habits of Paris had no resemblance to the finished virtues, or to the polished vice and elegant, though not blameless luxury, of the capital of a great empire. Their society was more like that of a den of outlaws upon a doubtful frontier ; 30 of a lewd tavern for the revels and debauches of banditti, assassins, bravos, smugglers, and their more desperate

paramours, mixed with bombastic players, the refuse and rejected offal of strolling theatres, puffing out ill sorted verses about virtue, mixed with the licentious and blasphemous songs, proper to the brutal and hardened course of life belonging to that sort of wretches. This system of manners in itself is at war with all orderly and moral society, and is in its neighbourhood unsafe. If great bodies of that kind were anywhere established in a bordering territory, we should have a right to demand of their governments the suppression of such a nuisance. What are we to do if the government and the whole community is of the same description ? Yet that government has thought proper to invite ours to lay by its unjust hatred, and to listen to the voice of humanity as taught by their example. . . .

The writers on public law have often called this *aggregate* of nations [i.e. Europe] a commonwealth. They had reason. It is virtually one great state having the same basis of general law, with some diversity of provincial customs and local establishments. The nations of Europe have had the very same Christian religion, agreeing in the fundamental parts, varying a little in the ceremonies and in the subordinate doctrines. The whole of the polity and economy of every country in Europe has been derived from the same sources. It was drawn from the old Germanic or Gothic customary, from the feudal institutions which must be considered as an emanation from that customary ; and the whole has been improved and digested into system and discipline by the Roman law. From hence arose the several orders, with or without a monarch (which are called states), in every European country ; the strong traces of which, where monarchy predominated, were never wholly extinguished or merged in despotism. In the few places where monarchy was cast off the spirit of European monarchy was still left.

Those countries still continued countries of states ; that is, of classes, orders, and distinctions such as had before subsisted, or nearly so. Indeed the force and form of the institution called states continued in greater perfection in those republican communities than under monarchies. From all those sources arose a system of manners and of education which was nearly similar in all this quarter of the globe ; and which softened, blended, and harmonized the colours of the whole. There was little difference in the form of the universities for the education of their youth, 10 whether with regard to faculties, to sciences, or to the more liberal and elegant kinds of erudition. From this resemblance in the modes of intercourse, and in the whole form and fashion of life, no citizen of Europe could be altogether an exile in any part of it. There was nothing more than a pleasing variety to recreate and instruct the mind, to enrich the imagination, and to meliorate the heart. When a man travelled or resided for health, pleasure, business, or necessity, from his own country, he never felt himself quite abroad.

20 The whole body of this new scheme of manners, in support of the new scheme of politics, I consider as a strong and decisive proof of determined ambition and systematic hostility. I defy the most refining ingenuity to invent any other cause for the total departure of the Jacobin republic from every one of the ideas and usages, religious, legal, moral, or social, of this civilized world, and for her tearing herself from its communion with such studied violence, but from a formed resolution of keeping no terms with that world. It has not been, as has been falsely 30 and insidiously represented, that these miscreants had only broke with their old government. They made a schism with the whole universe, and that schism extended to almost everything, great and small.

*Debasement of the European Ambassadors suing for Peace*

(From the same.)

To those who do not love to contemplate the fall of human greatness I do not know a more mortifying spectacle than to see the assembled majesty of the crowned heads of Europe waiting as patient suitors in the ante-chamber of regicide. They wait, it seems, until the sanguinary tyrant *Carnot* shall have snorted away the fumes of the indigested blood of his sovereign. Then, when, sunk on the down of usurped pomp, he shall have sufficiently indulged his meditations with what monarch 10 he shall next glut his ravening maw, he may condescend to signify that it is his pleasure to be awake ; and that he is at leisure to receive the proposals of his high and mighty clients for the terms on which he may respite the execution of the sentence he has passed upon them. At the opening of those doors, what a sight it must be to behold the plenipotentiaries of royal impotence, in the precedence which they will intrigue to obtain, and which will be granted to them according to the seniority of their degradation, sneaking into the regicide presence, and with 20 the relics of the smile which they had dressed up for the levee of their masters still flickering on their curled lips, presenting the faded remains of their courtly graces, to meet the scornful, ferocious, sardonic grin of a bloody ruffian, who, whilst he is receiving their homage, is measuring them with his eye, and fitting to their size the slider of his guillotine ! These ambassadors may easily return as good courtiers as they went ; but can they ever return from that degrading residence, loyal and faithful subjects ; or with any true affection to their master, or 30 true attachment to the constitution, religion, or laws of their country ? There is great danger that they, who

enter smiling into this Trophonian cave, will come out of it sad and serious conspirators ; and such will continue as long as they live. They will become true conductors of contagion to every country which has had the misfortune to send them to the source of that electricity. At best they will become totally indifferent to good and evil, to one institution or another. This species of indifference is but too generally distinguishable in those who have been much employed in foreign courts ; but in the present case the evil must be aggravated without measure ; for they <sup>10</sup> go from their country, not with the pride of the old character, but in a state of the lowest degradation ; and what must happen in their place of residence can have no effect in raising them to the level of true dignity, or of chaste self-estimation, either as men, or as representatives of crowned heads.

*The Indecipherable in the Revolution*

(From *Reflections on the Revolution in France*.)

I HAVE told you candidly my sentiments. I think they are not likely to alter yours. I do not know that they ought. You are young ; you cannot guide, but must follow the fortune of your country. But hereafter they <sup>20</sup> may be of some use to you, in some future form which your commonwealth may take. In the present it can hardly remain ; but before its final settlement it may be obliged to pass, as one of our poets says, 'through great varieties of untried being,' and in all its transmigrations to be purified by fire and blood.

(From *Thoughts on French Affairs*, 1791.)

THE evil is stated, in my opinion, as it exists. The remedy must be where power, wisdom, and information, I hope, are more united with good intentions than they can be with me. I have done with this subject, I believe, <sup>30</sup>

for ever. It has given me many anxious moments for the two last years. If a great change is to be made in human affairs, the minds of men will be fitted to it ; the general opinions and feelings will draw that way. Every fear, every hope, will forward it ; and then they who persist in opposing this mighty current in human affairs will appear rather to resist the decrees of Providence itself, than the mere designs of men. They will not be resolute and firm, but perverse and obstinate.

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## HIS OWN LIFE

### *His Political Friendships*

(From *A Letter to the Sheriffs of Bristol, 1777.*)

10 By the favour of my fellow-citizens I am the representative of an honest, well-ordered, virtuous city ; of a people who preserve more of the original English simplicity and purity of manners than perhaps any other. You possess among you several men and magistrates of large and cultivated understandings ; fit for any employment in any sphere. I do, to the best of my power, act so as to make myself worthy of so honourable a choice. If I were ready, on any call of my own vanity or interest, or to answer any election purpose, to forsake principles (whatever they are) which I had formed at a mature age, on full reflection, and which had been confirmed by long experience, I should forfeit the only thing which makes you pardon so many errors and imperfections in me. Not that I think it fit for any one to rely too much on his own understanding ; or to be filled with a presumption, not becoming a Christian man, in his own personal stability and rectitude.

I hope I am far from that vain confidence which almost

always fails in trial. I know my weakness in all respects as much at least as any enemy I have ; and I attempt to take security against it. The only method which has ever been found effectual to preserve any man against the corruption of nature and example is a habit of life and communication of counsels with the most virtuous and public-spirited men of the age you live in. Such a society cannot be kept without advantage, or deserted without shame. For this rule of conduct I may be called in reproach a *party man* ; but I am little affected with such aspersions. In the way <sup>10</sup> which they call party I worship the constitution of your fathers ; and I shall never blush for my political company. All reverence to honour, all idea of what it is, will be lost out of the world before it can be imputed as a fault to any man that he has been connected with those incomparable persons, living and dead, with whom for eleven years I have constantly thought and acted. If I have wandered out of the paths of rectitude into those of interested faction, it was in company with the Saviles, the Dowdeswells, the Wentworths, the Bentincks ; with the Lennoxes, the <sup>20</sup> Manchesters, the Keppels, the Saunderses ; with the temperate, permanent, hereditary virtue of the whole house of Cavendish ; names, among which some have extended your fame and empire in arms ; and all have fought the battle of your liberties in fields not less glorious.—These and many more like these, grafting public principles on private honour, have redeemed the present age, and would have adorned the most splendid period in your history. Where could any man, conscious of his own inability to act alone, and willing to act as he ought to do, have arranged himself better ? <sup>30</sup> If any one thinks this kind of society to be taken up as the best method of gratifying low, personal pride, or ambitious interest, he is mistaken ; and he knows nothing of the world.

*Conscience and Popularity*

(From the speech at Bristol previous to the Election, 1780.)

As to the opinion of the people, which some think, in such cases, is to be implicitly obeyed; nearly two years' tranquillity, which followed the act [for the relief of Roman Catholics], and its instant imitation in Ireland proved abundantly that the late horrible spirit was, in a great measure, the effect of insidious art, and perverse industry, and gross misrepresentation. But suppose that the dislike had been much more deliberate, and much more general than I am persuaded it was—when we know that 10 the opinions of even the greatest multitudes are the standard of rectitude, I shall think myself obliged to make those opinions the masters of my conscience. But if it may be doubted whether Omnipotence itself is competent to alter the essential constitution of right and wrong, sure I am that such *things* as they and I are possessed of no such power. No man carries further than I do the policy of making government pleasing to the people. But the widest range of this politic complaisance is confined within the limits of justice. I would not only consult the 20 interest of the people, but I would cheerfully gratify their humours. We are all a sort of children that must be soothed and managed. I think I am not austere or formal in my nature. I would bear, I would even myself play my part in, any innocent buffooneries to divert them. But I never will act the tyrant for their amusement. If they will mix malice in their sports, I shall never consent to throw them any living, sentient creature whatsoever, no not so much as a kitling, to torment.

‘But if I profess all this impolitic stubbornness, I may 30 chance never to be elected into parliament.’ It is certainly not pleasing to be put out of the public service. But I wish to be a member of parliament, to have my

share of doing good and resisting evil. It would therefore be absurd to renounce my objects, in order to obtain my seat. I deceive myself indeed most grossly, if I had not much rather pass the remainder of my life hidden in the recesses of the deepest obscurity, feeding my mind even with the visions and imaginations of such things, than to be placed on the most splendid throne of the universe, tantalized with a denial of the practice of all which can make the greatest situation any other than the greatest curse. Gentlemen, I have had my day. I can never <sup>10</sup> sufficiently express my gratitude to you for having set me in a place wherein I could lend the slightest help to great and laudable designs. If I have had my share in any measure giving quiet to private property and private conscience; if by my vote I have aided in securing to families the best possession, peace; if I have joined in reconciling kings to their subjects, and subjects to their prince; if I have assisted to loosen the foreign holdings of the citizen, and taught him to look for his protection to the laws of his country, and for his comfort to the good-will <sup>20</sup> of his countrymen;—if I have thus taken my part with the best of men in the best of their actions, I can shut the book;—I might wish to read a page or two more—but this is enough for my measure.—I have not lived in vain.

*The Speech at Bristol declining the Poll, September 9,  
1780*

GENTLEMEN,

I decline the election.—It has ever been my rule through life to observe a proportion between my efforts and my objects. I have never been remarkable for a bold, active, and sanguine pursuit of advantages that are <sup>30</sup> personal to myself.

I have not canvassed the whole of this city in form.

But I have taken such a view of it as satisfies my own mind that your choice will not ultimately fall upon me. Your city, gentlemen, is in a state of miserable distraction ; and I am resolved to withdraw whatever share my pretensions may have had in its unhappy divisions. I have not been in haste ; I have tried all prudent means ; I have waited for the effect of all contingencies. If I were fond of a contest, by the partiality of my numerous friends (whom you know to be among the most weighty and 10 respectable people of the city) I have the means of a sharp one in my hands. But I thought it far better with my strength unspent, and my reputation unimpaired, to do, early and from foresight, that which I might be obliged to do from necessity at last.

I am not in the least surprised, nor in the least angry at this view of things. I have read the book of life for a long time, and I have read other books a little. Nothing has happened to me but what has happened to men much better than me, and in times and in nations full as 20 good as the age and the country that we live in. To say that I am no way concerned would be neither decent nor true. The representation of *Bristol* was an object on many accounts dear to me ; and I certainly should very far prefer it to any other in the kingdom. My habits are made to it ; and it is in general more unpleasant to be rejected after long trial than not to be chosen at all.

But, gentlemen, I will see nothing except your former kindness, and I will give way to no other sentiments than those of gratitude. From the bottom of my heart I thank 30 you for what you have done for me. You have given me a long term, which is now expired. I have performed the conditions, and enjoyed all the profits to the full ; and I now surrender your estate into your hands, without being in a single tile or a single stone impaired or wasted by my use. I have served the public for fifteen years. I have

served you in particular for six. What is passed is well stored. It is safe, and out of the power of fortune. What is to come is in wiser hands than ours: and He in whose hands it is best knows whether it is best for you and me that I should be in parliament, or even in the world.

Gentlemen, the melancholy event of yesterday reads to us an awful lesson against being too much troubled about any of the objects of ordinary ambition. The worthy gentleman<sup>1</sup> who has been snatched from us at the moment of the election, and in the middle of the 10 contest, whilst his desires were as warm, and his hopes as eager as ours, has feelingly told us what shadows we are, and what shadows we pursue.

It has been usual for a candidate who declines to take his leave by a letter to the sheriffs; but I received your trust in the face of day: and in the face of day I accept your dismission. I am not,—I am not at all ashamed to look upon you; nor can my presence discompose the order of business here. I humbly and respectfully take my leave of the sheriffs, the candidates, and the electors, 20 wishing heartily that the choice may be for the best, at a time which calls, if ever time did call, for service that is not nominal. It is no plaything you are about. I tremble when I consider the trust I have presumed to ask. I confided perhaps too much in my intentions. They were really fair and upright; and I am bold to say that I ask no ill thing for you, when on parting from this place I pray that whomever you choose to succeed me, he may resemble me exactly in all things, except in my abilities to serve, and my fortune to please you.

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<sup>1</sup> Mr. Coombe [one of the candidates].

*The Consistency of his Political Views*

(From *An Appeal from the New to the Old Whigs* : published July 1791.)

As any one of the great members of this constitution happens to be endangered, he that is a friend to all of them chooses and presses the topics necessary for the support of the part attacked, with all the strength, the earnestness, the vehemence, with all the power of stating, of argument, and of colouring, which he happens to possess, and which the case demands. He is not to embarrass the minds of his hearers, or to encumber, or overlay his speech, by bringing into view at once (as if he were reading an academic lecture) all that may and ought, when a just occasion presents itself, to be said in favour of the other members. At that time they are out of the court ; there is no question concerning them. Whilst he opposes his defence on the part where the attack is made, he presumes that for his regard to the just rights of all the rest he has credit in every candid mind. He ought not to apprehend that his raising fences about popular privileges this day will infer that he ought, on the next, to concur with those who would pull down the throne : because, on the next, he defends the throne, it ought not to be supposed that he has abandoned the rights of the people.

A man who, among various objects of his equal regard, is secure of some, and full of anxiety for the fate of others, is apt to go to much greater lengths in his preference of the objects of his immediate solicitude than Mr. Burke has ever done. A man so circumstanced often seems to undervalue, to vilify, almost to reprobate and disown those that are out of danger. This is the voice of nature and truth, and not of inconsistency and false pretence. The danger of anything very dear to us removes, for the moment, every other affection from the mind. When

Priam had his whole thoughts employed on the body of his Hector, he repels with indignation, and drives from him with a thousand reproaches his surviving sons, who with an officious piety crowded about him to offer their assistance. A good critic (there is no better than Mr. Fox) would say that this is a master-stroke, and marks a deep understanding of nature in the father of poetry. He would despise a Zoilus, who would conclude from this passage that Homer meant to represent this man of affliction as hating, or being indifferent and cold in his ~~10~~ affections to the poor relics of his house, or that he preferred a dead carcass to his living children.

Mr. Burke does not stand in need of an allowance of this kind, which, if he did, by candid critics ought to be granted to him. If the principles of a mixed constitution be admitted, he wants no more to justify to consistency everything he has said and done during the course of a political life just touching to its close.

*Nitor in adversum*

(From *A Letter to a Noble Lord.*)

BUT do I justify his majesty's grace on these grounds ? I think them the least of my services ! The time gave ~~20~~ them an occasional value. What I have done in the way of political economy was far from confined to this body of measures. I did not come into parliament to con my lesson. I had earned my pension before I set my foot in St. Stephen's chapel. I was prepared and disciplined to this political warfare. The first session I sat in parliament I found it necessary to analyse the whole commercial, financial, constitutional, and foreign interests of Great Britain and its empire. A great deal was then done ; and more, far more, would have been done, if more had ~~30~~ been permitted by events. Then, in the vigour of my manhood, my constitution sank under my labour. Had

I then died (and I seemed to myself very near death), I had then earned for those who belonged to me more than the Duke of Bedford's ideas of service are of power to estimate. But, in truth, these services I am called to account for are not those on which I value myself the most. If I were to call for a reward (which I have never done), it should be for those in which for fourteen years, without intermission, I showed the most industry, and had the least success: I mean in the affairs of India.

10 They are those on which I value myself the most; most for the importance; most for the labour; most for the judgement; most for constancy and perseverance in the pursuit. Others may value them most for the *intention*. In that, surely, they are not mistaken.

Does his grace think that they who advised the crown to make my retreat easy considered me only as an economist? That, well understood, however, is a good deal. If I had not deemed it of some value, I should not have made political economy an object of my humble 20 studies, from my very early youth to near the end of my service in parliament, even before (at least to any knowledge of mine) it had employed the thoughts of speculative men in other parts of Europe. At that time it was still in its infancy in England, where, in the last century, it had its origin. Great and learned men thought my studies were not wholly thrown away, and deigned to communicate with me now and then on some particulars of their immortal works. Something of these studies may appear incidentally in some of the earliest things I published. The House has 30 been witness to their effect, and has profited of them, more or less, for above eight-and-twenty years.

To their estimate I leave the matter. I was not, like his grace of Bedford, swaddled, and rocked, and dandled into a legislator; '*Nitor in adversum*' is the motto for a man like me. I possessed not one of the qualities, nor

cultivated one of the arts that recommend men to the favour and protection of the great. I was not made for a minion or a tool. As little did I follow the trade of winning the hearts, by imposing on the understandings, of the people. At every step of my progress in life (for in every step was I traversed and opposed), and at every turnpike I met, I was obliged to show my passport, and again and again to prove my sole title to the honour of being useful to my country by a proof that I was not wholly unacquainted with its laws and the whole system <sup>10</sup> of its interests both abroad and at home. Otherwise no rank, no toleration even, for me. I had no arts but manly arts. On them I have stood, and, please God, in spite of the Duke of Bedford and the Earl of Lauderdale, to the last gasp will I stand.

*Himself and the Duke of Bedford : the Proportion of Utility to Reward*

(From the same.)

I KNOW not how it has happened, but it really seems that, whilst his grace was meditating his well-considered censure upon me, he fell into a sort of sleep. Homer nods ; and the Duke of Bedford may dream ; and as dreams (even in his golden dreams) are apt to be ill-pieced, and <sup>20</sup> incongruously put together, his grace preserved his idea of reproach to *me*, but took the subject-matter from the crown grants to *his own family*. This is ' the stuff of which his dreams are made '. In that way of putting things together his grace is perfectly in the right. The grants to the house of Russell were so enormous as not only to outrage economy, but even to stagger credibility. The Duke of Bedford is the leviathan among all the creatures of the crown. He tumbles about his unwieldy bulk ; he plays and frolics in the ocean of the royal bounty. Huge <sup>30</sup> as he is, and whilst ' he lies floating many a rood ', he is

still a creature. His ribs, his fins, his whalebone, his blubber, the very spiracles through which he spouts a torrent of brine against his origin, and covers me all over with the spray,—everything of him and about him is the throne. Is it for *him* to question the dispensation of the royal favour?

I really am at a loss to draw any sort of parallel between the public merits of his grace, by which he justifies the grants he holds, and these services of mine, on the 10 favourable construction of which I have obtained what his grace so much disapproves. In private life I have not at all the honour of acquaintance with the noble duke. But I ought to presume, and it costs me nothing to do so, that he abundantly deserves the esteem and love of all who live with him. But as to public service, why truly it would not be more ridiculous for me to compare myself in rank, in fortune, in splendid descent, in youth, strength, or figure, with the Duke of Bedford, than to make a parallel between his services and my attempts to be useful to my 20 country. It would not be gross adulation, but uncivil irony, to say that he has any public merit of his own to keep alive the idea of the services by which his vast landed pensions were obtained. My merits, whatever they are, are original and personal; his are derivative. It is his ancestor, the original pensioner, that has laid up this inexhaustible fund of merit, which makes his grace so very delicate and exceptionious about the merit of all other grantees of the crown. Had he permitted me to remain unquiet, I should have said, 'tis his estate; that's enough. 30 It is his by law; what have I to do with it or its history? He would naturally have said on his side, 'tis this man's fortune.—He is as good now as my ancestor was two hundred and fifty years ago. I am a young man with very old pensions; he is an old man with very young pensions,—that's all.

Why will his grace, by attacking me, force me reluctantly to compare my little merit with that which obtained from the crown those prodigies of profuse donation, by which he tramples on the mediocrity of humble and laborious individuals? I would willingly leave him to the herald's college, which the philosophy of the *sans-culottes* (prouder by far than all the Garters, and Norroys, and Clarencieux, and Rouge Dragons that ever pranced in a procession of what his friends call aristocrats and despots) will abolish with contumely and scorn. These 10 historians, recorders, and blazoners of virtues and arms, differ wholly from that other description of historians, who never assign any act of politicians to a good motive. These gentle historians, on the contrary, dip their pens in nothing but the milk of human kindness. They seek no further for merit than the preamble of a patent, or the inscription of a tomb. With them every man created a peer is first a hero ready made. They judge of every man's capacity for office by the offices he has filled; and the more offices the more ability. Every general officer 20 with them is a Marlborough; every statesman a Burleigh; every judge a Murray or a Yorke. They who, alive, were laughed at or pitied by all their acquaintance, make as good a figure as the best of them in the pages of Guillim, Edmondson, and Collins.

To these recorders, so full of good nature to the great and prosperous, I would willingly leave the first Baron Russell, and Earl of Bedford, and the merits of his grants. But the alnager, the weigher, the meter of grants will not suffer us to acquiesce in the judgement of the prince 30 reigning at the time when they were made. They are never good to those who earn them. Well then; since the new grantees have war made on them by the old, and that the word of the sovereign is not to be taken, let us turn our eyes to history, in which great men have always

a pleasure in contemplating the heroic origin of their house.

The first peer of the name, the first purchaser of the grants, was a Mr. Russell, a person of an ancient gentleman's family, raised by being a minion of Henry VIII. As there generally is some resemblance of character to create these relations, the favourite was in all likelihood much such another as his master. The first of those immoderate grants was not taken from the ancient <sup>10</sup> mesne of the crown, but from the recent confiscation of the ancient nobility of the land. The lion, having sucked the blood of his prey, threw the offal carcass to the jackal in waiting. Having tasted once the food of confiscation, the favourites became fierce and ravenous. This worthy favourite's first grant was from the lay nobility. The second, infinitely improving on the enormity of the first, was from the plunder of the church. In truth his grace is somewhat excusable for his dislike to a grant like mine, not only in its quantity, but in its kind so different from <sup>20</sup> his own.

• • • • • • • • • • •  
Thus stands the account of the comparative merits of the crown grants which compose the Duke of Bedford's fortune as balanced against mine. In the name of common sense, why should the Duke of Bedford think that none but of the house of Russell are entitled to the favour of the crown? Why should he imagine that no king of England has been capable of judging of merit but King Henry VIII? Indeed, he will pardon me; he is a little mistaken; all virtue did not end in the first Earl of <sup>30</sup> Bedford. All discernment did not lose its vision when his creator closed his eyes. Let him remit his rigour on the disproportion between merit and reward in others, and they will make no inquiry into the origin of his fortune. They will regard with much more satisfaction, as he will

contemplate with infinitely more advantage, whatever in his pedigree has been dulcified by an exposure to the influence of heaven in a long flow of generations, from the hard, acidulous, metallic tincture of the spring. It is little to be doubted that several of his forefathers in that long series have degenerated into honour and virtue. Let the Duke of Bedford (I am sure he will) reject with scorn and horror, the counsels of the lecturers, those wicked panders to avarice and ambition, who would tempt him, in the troubles of his country, to seek another enormous fortune from the forfeitures of another nobility, and the plunder of another church. Let him (and I trust that yet he will) employ all the energy of his youth, and all the resources of his wealth, to crush rebellious principles which have no foundation in morals, and rebellious movements that have no provocation in tyranny.

Had it pleased God to continue to me the hopes of succession, I should have been, according to my mediocrity and the mediocrity of the age I live in, a sort of founder of a family: I should have left a son who, in all the 20 points in which personal merit can be viewed, in science, in erudition, in genius, in taste, in honour, in generosity, in humanity, in every liberal sentiment, and every liberal accomplishment, would not have shown himself inferior to the Duke of Bedford, or to any of those whom he traces in his line. His grace very soon would have wanted all plausibility in his attack upon that provision which belonged more to mine than to me. HE would soon have supplied every deficiency, and symmetrized every disproportion. It would not have been for that successor to 30 resort to any stagnant wasting reservoir of merit in me, or in any ancestry. He had in himself a salient, living spring of generous and manly action. Every day he lived he would have re-purchased the bounty of the crown,

and ten times more, if ten times more he had received. He was made a public creature ; and had no enjoyment whatever but in the performance of some duty. At this exigent moment the loss of a finished man is not easily supplied.

But a Disposer whose power we are little able to resist and whose wisdom it behoves us not at all to dispute, has ordained it in another manner, and (whatever my querulous weakness might suggest) a far better. The storm 10 has gone over me ; and I lie like one of those old oaks which the late hurricane has scattered about me. I am stripped of all my honours, I am torn up by the roots, and lie prostrate on the earth ! There, and prostrate there, I most unfeignedly recognize the Divine justice, and in some degree submit to it. But whilst I humble myself before God, I do not know that it is forbidden to repel the attacks of unjust and inconsiderate men. The patience of Job is proverbial. After some of the convulsive struggles of our irritable nature, he submitted himself, and repented 20 in dust and ashes. But even so, I do not find him blamed for reprehending, and with a considerable degree of verbal asperity, those ill-natured neighbours of his who visited his dunghill to read moral, political, and economical lectures on his misery. I am alone. I have none to meet my enemies in that gate. Indeed, my lord, I greatly deceive myself, if in this hard season I would give a peck of refuse wheat for all that is called fame and honour in the world. This is the appetite but of a few. It is a luxury, it is a privilege, it is an indulgence for those who are at their 30 ease. But we are all of us made to shun disgrace, as we are made to shrink from pain, and poverty, and disease. It is an instinct ; and under the direction of reason, instinct is always in the right. I live in an inverted order. They who ought to have succeeded me have gone before me. They who should have been to me as posterity are in the

place of ancestors. I owe to the dearest relation (which ever must subsist in memory) that act of piety which he would have performed to me; I owe it to him to show that he was not descended, as the Duke of Bedford would have it, from an unworthy parent.

The crown has considered me after long service: the crown has paid the Duke of Bedford by advance. He has had a long credit for any service which he may perform hereafter. He is secure, and long may he be secure, in his advance, whether he performs any services or not. 10 But let him take care how he endangers the safety of that constitution which secures his own utility or his own insignificance; or how he discourages those who take up even puny arms to defend an order of things which, like the sun of heaven, shines alike on the useful and the worthless. His grants are engrafted on the public law of Europe, covered with the awful hoar of innumerable ages. They are guarded by the sacred rules of prescription, found in that full treasury of jurisprudence from which the jejuneness and penury of our municipal law has, by 20 degrees, been enriched and strengthened. This prescription I had my share (a very full share) in bringing to its perfection.<sup>1</sup> The Duke of Bedford will stand as long as prescriptive law endures: as long as the great, stable laws of property, common to us with all civilized nations, are kept in their integrity, and without the smallest inter-mixture of laws, maxims, principles, or precedents of the grand revolution. They are secure against all changes but one. The whole revolutionary system, institutes, digest, code, novels, text, gloss, comment, are, not only 30 not the same, but they are the very reverse, and the reverse fundamentally, of all the laws on which civil life has hitherto been upheld in all the governments of the world. The learned professors of the rights of man

<sup>1</sup> Sir George Savile's Act called The *Nullum Tempus Act.*

regard prescription, not as a title to bar all claim set up against all possession—but they look on prescription as itself a bar against the possessor and proprietor. They hold an immemorial possession to be no more than a long continued, and therefore an aggravated injustice.

Such are *their* ideas ; such *their* religion, and such *their* law. But as to *our* country and *our* race, as long as the well-compacted structure of our church and state, the sanctuary, the holy of holies of that ancient law, defended <sup>10</sup> by reverence, defended by power, a fortress at once and a temple,<sup>1</sup> shall stand inviolate on the brow of the British Sion—as long as the British monarchy, not more limited than fenced by the orders of the state, shall, like the proud Keep of Windsor, rising in the majesty of proportion, and girt with the double belt of its kindred and coeval towers, as long as this awful structure shall oversee and guard the subject land—so long the mounds and dykes of the low, fat, Bedford level will have nothing to fear from all the pickaxes of all the levellers of France. As long as our <sup>20</sup> sovereign lord the king, and his faithful subjects, the lords and commons of this realm,—the triple cord which no man can break ; the solemn, sworn, constitutional frank-pledge of this nation ; the firm guarantees of each others' being and each others' rights ; the joint and several securities, each in its place and order, for every kind and every quality of property and of dignity :—as long as these endure, so long the Duke of Bedford is safe : and we are all safe together—the high from the blights of envy and the spoliations of rapacity ; the low from the iron <sup>30</sup> hand of oppression and the insolent spurn of contempt. Amen ! and so be it : and so it will be,

Dum domus Aeneae Capitolii immobile saxum  
accolet ; imperiumque pater Romanus habebit.

<sup>1</sup> *Templum in modum arcis.* Tacitus, of the temple of Jerusalem.

## NOTES

### HAZLITT'S ESSAY ON BURKE

PAGE 2, l. 31. 'The elephant to make them sport,' &c.  
*Paradise Lost*, iv. 345.

PAGE 3, l. 2. 'Native and endued.' *Hamlet*, iv. vii. 180.

l. 11. 'he was the most eloquent man,' &c. This remark occurs in a tribute to Burke from Dr. French Lawrence, quoted in Prior's *Life* (Bohn), p. 488.

PAGE 6, l. 14. *Seneca*. Perhaps a reference to the latter part of *Epistula* 82, where the argument is that 'quaedam inefficacia et inutilia ipsa subtilitas facit.'

PAGE 7, l. 32. 'Alas! Leviathan was not so tamed.' Cowper, *The Task*, ii. 322.

PAGE 8, l. 20. *to incorporate the domestic charities*, &c. See p. 147, l. 25 f.

PAGE 9, l. 10. *no objection to an institution that it is founded in prejudice*. See p. 154, l. 9 f.

PAGE 13, l. 4. *How charming!* &c. *Comus* 476.

PAGE 16, l. 23. *comparison between our connexion with France or Algiers*: Letter I.

l. 24. *account of the conduct of the war*: in Letter II.

PAGE 17, l. 18. *as Dr. Johnson observed*: in the *Life of Pope*.

PAGE 18, l. 10. *a person to whose opinion*, &c.: a note in the standard edition of Hazlitt's *Works*, ed. Waller and Glover, suggests that this was Joseph Fawcett, his early friend, whom he praises in the *Essay on Criticism* in *Table Talk*.

l. 20. *fine things of Lord Bolingbroke's*. Henry St. John (1678-1751). Foreign Secretary 1710-14. His chief political writings are: *A Dissertation on Parties* (written in 1733), *Letters on the Study of History* (written 1735-6), and *The Idea of a Patriot King* (written 1738).

l. 21. *Junius*: a number of letters, appearing under this pseudonym in the *Public Advertiser* between November 1768 and January 1772, denouncing the Court and Parliament, and especially the Duke of Grafton and Lord North, in a forcible and mordant style, were, in spite of his disclaimers, persistently attributed to Burke. There is strong evidence that the author was Sir Philip Francis, the adversary of Warren Hastings.

Footnote. 'proud keep of Windsor.' See p. 176.

### COLERIDGE ON BURKE

PAGE 19, l. 5. *his last posthumous tracts*: the third and fourth of the *Letters on a Regicide Peace* and the *Thoughts and Details on Scarcity* were posthumously published.

PAGE 20, l. 13. *said by Goldsmith*. See p. 36.

## MOORE ON BURKE

PAGE 21, l. 24. *Fortis in armis, &c.* Lucan v. 345. 'As Caesar's soldier Labienus was mighty ; now, as a deserter, he was held cheap.'

## DE QUINCEY ON BURKE

PAGE 23, l. 12. *picture of the degradation of Europe.* See p. 158 ; but the passage refers to the negotiations in Paris a year after the peace with Prussia concluded at Basel.

l. 26. *Dr. Lawrence* : French Lawrence (1757-1809), Burke's intimate friend and his literary executor, counsel to the Managers of Hastings's impeachment.

PAGE 24, l. 20. *described by Dr. Whately* : Richard Whately, Archbishop of Dublin. De Quincey is reviewing his *Rhetoric* (1828).

PAGE 26, l. 13. *the passage . . . quoted from Taylor* : 'His mercies are more than we can tell, and they are more than we can feel : for all the world, in the abyss of the Divine mercies, is like a man diving into the bottom of the sea, over whose head the waters run insensibly and unperceived, and yet the weight is vast, and the sum of them is immeasurable : and the man is not pressed with the burden, nor confounded with numbers : and no observation is able to recount, no sense sufficient to perceive, no memory large enough to retain, no understanding great enough to apprehend this infinity.'

## MATTHEW ARNOLD ON BURKE

PAGE 31, l. 11. *the old woman who threw her stool.* Jenny Geddes, on the reading of the Scottish Liturgy imposed by Archbishop Laud, Sunday, July 23, 1637. See the account in Carlyle's *Cromwell*, i. 78 (Everyman's Edition).

PAGE 32, l. 26. *Joubert has said, &c.* Joseph Joubert (1754-1824), an acute critic of literature and morals, to whom Arnold devotes one of his *Essays on Criticism*. See Raynal's edition of his *Pensées et Maximes*, Paris, 1850, vol. i, p. 355.

PAGE 34, l. 5. *Dr. Price.* Richard Price, a Unitarian minister and writer on morals (1723-91). His sermon before the Revolution Society at a conventicle in the Old Jewry on November 4, 1789 (published as *A Discourse on the Love of our Country*), in which he lauded the Revolution in France, was the immediate motive to Burke's *Reflections*.

l. 17. *some of the last pages he ever wrote* : this is, of course, a mistake. See p. 159.

l. 29. *like Balaam.* Num. xxii. 38.

## GOLDSMITH ON BURKE

PAGE 36, l. 17. *Tommy Townshend* (1733-1800), M.P. for Whitchurch, and afterwards Lord Sydney, who acted at times with, and at times against, the party of Rockingham and Fox.

## WORDSWORTH ON BURKE

The experience here described came in Wordsworth's way in 1791, when, after leaving Cambridge, in his twenty-second year, he spent some months in London.

PAGE 38, l. 15. *As the winds fret within the Aeolian cave.* See Virgil, *Aeneid* i. 50 f. Aeolus was king of the winds, which he confined in his cave and loosed at his pleasure.

l. 20. *like the Goddess from Jove's brain.* Athena, who at birth sprang from the head of Zeus in full armour.

## EARLY PHILOSOPHICAL TREATISES

PAGE 40. *A Vindication, &c.* The alternative title of this treatise was: *A View of the Miseries and Evils arising to Mankind from every Species of Civil Society, in a Letter to Lord —, by a late Noble Writer.* By the 'Noble Writer' was meant Bolingbroke (see note on p. 177), in whose person Burke was ironically posing, and so dexterously that even Warburton was deceived by the fiction. Bolingbroke, whose philosophical works appeared posthumously, edited by David Mallet, in 1754, had exalted the claims of natural as against revealed religion. Burke writes, as a parodist, to prove that by the same way of thinking natural society must be preferred to civil, as Rousseau had already argued in his *Discours sur les sciences et les arts* (1750), and his *Discours sur l'inégalité parmi les hommes* (1753). The public did not recognize the irony; and in 1765, when about to stand for Parliament, Burke issued a second edition, with a preface to explain it.

PAGE 41, l. 31. *the Bridewell of the universe*: a house of correction and jail for female offenders at St. Bride's Well, near London Bridge.

PAGE 42, l. 13. *beauty shou'd shun the right line, &c.* This may be explained by a previous passage: 'As perfectly beautiful bodies are not composed of angular parts, so their parts never continue long in the same right line. They vary their direction every moment, and they change under the eye.' On the other hand, he argues, the sense of grandeur depends on a sense of infinity, which is given by unbroken lines.

l. 20. *one founded on pain*, i. e. on the sense of the terrible.

PAGE 43. *The proper effect of poetry not pictorial.* Burke here anticipates the view set forth in his *Laokoon* (1766) by Lessing, who admired and translated the *Inquiry*.

l. 30. *Tres imbris, &c.* *Aeneid* viii. 429 f.

PAGE 44, l. 22. *Où vépeatis, &c.* *Iliad* iii. 156 f.

PAGE 45, l. 1. *description which Spenser has given of Belphoebe.* *Faerie Queene*, II. iii. 21-31.

l. 9. *Humana ante oculos, &c.* Lucretius i. 62 f.: 'Seeing that human life lay low and vile upon the earth, crushed by the weight of superstition, which showed her head in

the heavens, and pressed upon men with the menace of her dreadful look, a man of Greece adventured, he first of his kind, to lift up mortal eyes to meet her.'

### HOME AFFAIRS

PAGE 47, l. 32. *a great man.* Maximilien de Béthune, Duc de Sully (1560-1641), was Minister of Finance under Henry IV of France.

PAGE 48, l. 24. *a certain set of intriguing men.* He alludes to the king's mother, Princess Augusta of Saxe-Gotha, and the Earl of Bute (1713-92). Frederick, who gathered at his Court the chief opponents of his father George II's government, died in 1751. Bute became his confidant in 1747, and with the Princess indoctrinated her son in the new Toryism. He retired from political activity in 1766. The 'King's Friends' were disreputable and obscure personages in lucrative positions like the Earl of March, and for a long time were immediately commanded by the leaders of the Bedford faction, notably Lord Sandwich and Richard Rigby.

PAGE 49, l. 23. *a perspective view*, i. e. a transparency, as in a puppet-show. The allusion is to a pamphlet written by Douglas, Bishop of Salisbury, and inspired by Lord Bath (Pulteney), one of the last of the old Tories, in which a spotless virtue was professed on behalf of the Court. It was published in 1761, and entitled, *Seasonable Hints from an Honest Man on the Present Important Crisis of a new Reign and a new Parliament.*

l. 27. *Atè*, the goddess of infatuation. Zeus flung her from Heaven in *Iliad*, xix. 126 f.

PAGE 50, l. 7. *talking prose, &c.* like M. Jourdain, in Molière's *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*.

l. 17. *Mettre le Roy, &c.*: i. e. 'to bring the king out of guardianship', a phrase applied by Mézeray and other historians to Louis XI.

PAGE 52, l. 14. *control upon the people.* In 1763 John Wilkes (1727-97), a Member of Parliament and editor of the *North Briton*, published an attack on the king in No. 45 of that journal. He was arrested illegally on a general warrant, and released by the Court of Common Pleas; was then prosecuted for libel and expelled the House of Commons (1764). While his case was still pending he absconded to France, and was outlawed in his absence. In 1768 he returned, and after being elected for Middlesex, stood his trial, and was fined and imprisoned. Between February and April 1769 the Commons three times disqualified him and he was three times re-elected for Middlesex, until his opponent, Colonel Luttrell, was seated by a resolution of the House in his stead, a gross infringement of constitutional right. The entire course of these proceedings

was marked by formidable rioting and intense excitement, Wilkes having become not only a 'hero', but a symbol of the democratic cause in respect of the freedom of the constituencies and the freedom of the Press. The antagonism of the nation and the House of Commons was again evinced in the spring of 1770, when the Corporation of London presented an outspoken petition to the king on the abuses of his government, and both Houses voted an address reprobating the petition.

l. 30. *a petitioning nation*: the right of petitioning Parliament or the king on matters of public policy was at that time the most effective means of voicing the national will, and was abundantly used in 1769 and 1770.

l. 33. *who vote thanks*, e.g. in the address on the Preliminary Peace of Fontainebleau at the end of 1762.

l. 35. *who are eager to grant*. The allusion is to the payment of the debts of the Civil List, without demanding the accounts, in 1769.

PAGE 55, l. 32. *meetings of counties*. These were a regular part of the political machinery. They were convened by the sheriff, at the instance of any considerable person or persons in the county, on local or national questions, and were attended by all freeholders.

PAGE 58, l. 23. *an old scholastic aphorism*: 'homo solus aut deus aut daemon', quoted in Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy*, pt. i, sect. 2, mem. 2, and by Bacon in his *Essay Of Friendship*. Aristotle, in his *Politics*, i. 2. 14, says that the self-sufficient man is 'either a beast or a god' ( $\eta\thetaηπιον\eta\thetaεός$ ).

PAGE 59. *Observations, &c.* The 'Publication' was by George Grenville, or by one of his secretaries under his supervision, commending Lord Bute's government and his own, censuring Lord Rockingham's, and suggesting an amendment of the franchise among other projects of reform.

PAGE 60. *Speech in the House of Commons*: on Pitt's private motion for an inquiry into the state of Parliamentary Representation. It was proposed during the second administration of Lord Rockingham and defeated by a small majority. It was the outcome of a violent agitation in the country, which began in December 1779.

PAGE 62, l. 24. *extend a parent's breath*. Pope, *Epistle to Arbuthnot* 410.

*Letter to Sir Hercules Langrishe*: on the electoral disability of the Roman Catholics in Ireland. Langrishe was an official, and introduced the bill for the enfranchisement of the Roman Catholics which became law in 1793.

PAGE 63. *Speech at Bristol*, in returning thanks for his election. He was pressed to say whether he would vote in Parliament according to the wishes of his constituents, as his colleague, a Bristol merchant named Cruger, had promised to do.

PAGE 65, l. 31. *superior orb and first mover*, i. e. the *primum mobile*, the outermost sphere, added in the Middle Ages to the Ptolemaic system. It was supposed to revolve around the earth in twenty-four hours, carrying with it the contained spheres.

PAGE 66. *Measures for Economical Reform*. Burke brought forward a plan of economical reform three times: (a) In the present speech, in which he proposed to abolish a number of court offices, to reform certain of the departments, limit pensions, sell the Crown lands, and remove the separate establishments for Cornwall, Lancaster, and Wales. His bills were wrecked in Committee. (b) To the new Parliament assembled in the autumn of this year after the General Election, his bill being defeated. (c) In 1782, after Rockingham had taken office, when the bill was passed in a reduced form. It effected a saving of more than £70,000 a year, and struck at the root of the royal influence.

PAGE 67, l. 16. *Boreas, &c.* *Paradise Lost*, x. 699.

l. 28. *jobs*, carpenters.

PAGE 68, l. 1. *Old Sarum* returned two members and contained no resident electors.

l. 3. 'the busy hum of men'. *L'Allegro*, l. 118.

l. 30. *Lord Talbot*. Earl Talbot, Lord Steward.

PAGE 69, l. 12. *Entire affection, &c.* *Faerie Queene*, i. viii. 40. The preceding line, if from Spenser, is misquoted.

l. 20 f. He granted a subsistence allowance in lieu of daily dinners to a number of officials, who took the allowance *and* the dinners. The following lines refer to the abuse of the menial offices being held, and even inherited, by persons of high standing, and the duty performed by understrappers. The Civil List (settled at £800,000) was charged, with the salaries of the Judges and of the British Ministers, to foreign courts.

PAGE 71, l. 16. *a certain duke*. Henry Fiennes Clinton, second Duke, nephew of Pitt's colleague, the first Duke, whose family name was Pelham. The second Duke was Cofferer of the Household.

l. 17. *high life below stairs*, the title of a popular farce by the Rev. James Townley (1759).

*Liberation of Irish Trade*. In 1663 an Act was passed excluding Ireland from the benefit of the Navigation Act, so that Irish vessels could only communicate with continental ports, and these were practically closed to them on the outbreak of war with France in 1778. An Act in 1665 prohibited the importation into England of Irish live stock, and another in 1699 the export of Irish manufactured wool, after which linen was the only staple industry. A bill granting free trade to Ireland was passed in 1780.

PAGE 74. *Catholic Emancipation in England*. An Act of 1700 forbade any Roman Catholic priest to exercise his office

under penalty of imprisonment for life, and prohibited Roman Catholics from buying or inheriting land, and educating their children abroad, the estates of children so educated being forfeit to the next Protestant heir. These penalties were eased by the indulgence of judges, but were sometimes enforced. They were removed by Sir George Savile's Bill in 1778, and the relief was extended in 1791 by complete freedom of education and worship, and in 1829 by the franchise.

PAGE 75. *Catholic Emancipation in Ireland.* The penal laws in Ireland dated from 1692. Roman Catholics were excluded from either House of Parliament, from all public offices, from the bar, the army, and (1727) the franchise. A Catholic landowner's son, on professing Protestantism, obtained a right to the reversion of his father's estate, and, if a minor, was withdrawn from his guardianship and maintained from his income. A Roman Catholic might not purchase real estate, or inherit land from a Protestant, or marry a Protestant, or bear arms, while his rights to the exercise of his religion and the education of his children were harshly restricted. The relief bills carried by Luke Gardiner in the Irish Parliament in 1778 gave Catholics the right to buy land, to teach in schools, and educate their children as they pleased. An almost complete measure of relief, which conferred the franchise, was carried in 1793.

PAGE 76. *Toleration of Dissenters.* This speech was on a bill to relieve Dissenting Ministers and teachers from subscription to the thirty-nine articles. It was rejected by the Lords; but a similar measure was passed in 1779.

PAGE 78. *Burke as Mentor of his Party.* Charles Lennox, third Duke of Richmond (1735-1806), was Secretary of State in Chatham's Administration in 1766-7, and was in the Cabinet from 1782 to 1795. He denounced the war on the American Colonies, and was, until the outbreak of the Revolution, an advocate of Parliamentary reform.

PAGE 80, l. 4. *Rolls-chapel*, in Chancery Lane, once the chapel of the house for converted Jews, later incorporated with the Record Office.

## AMERICA

The speech on Taxation was delivered in April 1774 on a motion to repeal the tea duty.

l. 10. *memory of a great man.* On George Grenville (1712-70) see Macaulay's *Essay on Chatham*. He was Treasurer of the Navy in the Pitt-Newcastle Administration 1757-62, and Secretary of State and First Lord of the Admiralty under Bute. Macaulay thought his government of 1763-5 'the worst since the Restoration'. On the dismissal of Rockingham in 1766 Grenville joined him in opposing the new Ministry, except on the taxation of America, which he supported.

PAGE 82, l. 2. *act of navigation*, or more correctly the system of which the first Navigation Act of 1651 was the base. It forbade the importation of goods into Britain or her plantations except in British ships or ships belonging to the countries where the goods were produced. Other acts debarred the Americans from exporting many of their chief products except to British markets, where, however, they had a monopoly; nor might they import goods, with some exceptions, but in ships sailing straight from Great Britain. Their manufactures were restricted, and port duties, for the regulation of trade, but not for revenue, were levied in America by the British Government.

l. 35. *Much greater happened afterwards*, in March 1764, when new port duties were imposed, and the contraband trade suppressed.

PAGE 83, l. 7. *your repeal*, i. e. of the Stamp Act.

l. 15. *Clarum et venerabile nomen*, Lucan ix. 202.

PAGE 84, l. 1. *led him into measures*. See Macaulay's *Essay* on the ministry formed, in July 1766, of survivors of Rockingham's government, independents, and king's men. Chatham's mind became clouded in the following February, and he remained incapable for two years, though he did not formally resign until October 1768. In his absence the real government was captured by Townshend, and then by the Bedford faction who came in in January 1768.

l. 21. *heads and points*, lying opposite ways, like pins, so as better to be accommodated, in the same subordinate office, a truckle-bed being one that runs on wheels under a larger bed. Lord North and George Cooke had never previously exchanged a word.

PAGE 85, l. 1. *his particular friends*. The sentence applies most aptly to the Duke of Grafton.

l. 26. *Charles Townshend* (1725-67). Chancellor of the Exchequer. He had held office under Pelham, Newcastle, Bute, Rockingham.

PAGE 86, l. 13. *between wind and water*, in the sensitive part. When a ship heels over to leeward the enemy aims at the part of the keel which is usually under water, but for the moment exposed.

PAGE 87, l. 14. *the fashion of this world*. 1 Cor. vii. 31.

PAGE 87. *Speech on Conciliation*. This was the last of several efforts by the opposition on the eve of hostilities, which began at Lexington on April 19. The Government had also made an offer to the Colonies. On February 20 North moved a resolution that if any Colony should provide what was approved by Parliament as its fair share towards the cost of defending and administering America, no tax or duty should be imposed except for the regulation of trade. This was opposed by Burke's party as 'ransom by auction', and they came forward with the plan of conciliation as an alternative measure (March 22).

l. 22. *It is good for us to be here.* Mark ix. 5 ; Luke ix. 33.

l. 24. *Clouds, &c.,* from Addison's *Cato*, v. 1.

l. 30. *my Lord Bathurst.* Allen, first Earl Bathurst (1684-1775), a friend of Pope and Swift, and later of Sterne. He was made an earl while his son was Lord Chancellor.

PAGE 88, l. 2. *acta parentum, &c.* Adapted from Virgil, *Elegies*, iv. 26.

l. 10. *made Great Britain, in 1707.*

*his son, Henry (1714-94), Lord Chancellor 1771-8, created Baron Apsley in 1771.*

PAGE 89, l. 6. The American whale fishery was formerly handicapped by duties, which were removed by Grenville in 1764, whereupon the Americans beat their rivals, the British and Dutch, out of the field.

l. 18. *frozen serpent of the south,* the Hydrus or water-snake, a small constellation within the Antarctic Circle.

PAGE 95, l. 4. *Apalachian Mountains,* the Alleghanies, the western boundary of the settlements.

l. 6. *a square of five hundred miles,* bounded by the Mississippi and the Lakes.

l. 17. *Increase and multiply,* from *Paradise Lost*, x. 730 ; the Bible has, ' Be fruitful and multiply '.

PAGE 96, l. 22. *Spoliatis, &c.* : Juvenal viii. 124.

l. 29. *your speech would betray you.* Matt. xxvi. 73.

PAGE 97, l. 1. ' *Ye gods,*' &c., taken from the Memoirs of *Martinus Scriblerus*, mainly by Arbuthnot (1741), ' on the Art of Sinking in Poetry ', where it is cited without name.

PAGE 98, l. 17. *ex vi termini,* by the import of the term.

PAGE 100, l. 25. *the great Serbonian bog, &c.* *Paradise Lost*, ii. 592.

PAGE 102, l. 16. *non meus hic, &c.* Horace, *Satires*, ii. 2. 2.

l. 30. *wise beyond what was written.* 1 Cor. iv. 6.

PAGE 105, l. 6. *the purchase paid,* the purchase money.

l. 7. *the immediate jewel, &c.* *Othello*, III. iii. 156.

l. 8. *a great house is apt, &c.* Juvenal, *Satires* v. 66 ' *Maxima quaeque domus servis est plena superbis*'.

l. 22. *the cords of man.* Hos. xi. 4.

l. 24. *Aristotle . . . cautions us, &c.* *Ethics* i. 4. 3-7, and i. 6. 13-15.

PAGE 106, l. 8. *Wales, and Chester, and Durham.* These, formerly separate principalities, were incorporated into the kingdom, and enfranchised (Wales and Chester in 1544, Durham finally in 1646), without breaking its unity.

PAGE 107, l. 8. *Posita luditur arca.* Juvenal i. 90 ; *arca* is the money-box of the rich man, opposed to *sacculus*, the pouch of the poor. ' The game is played for a high stake. '

PAGE 108, l. 9. *Ease would retract, &c.* *Paradise Lost*, iv. 96. It should be ' *recant*'.

l. 15. The most important American products were restricted

by law to the British market, and were sold to the foreigner by British dealers at a profit. The Exchequer reaped its duties on the imports, and the duties were paid by the dealer out of the profit.

PAGE 109, l. 27. *your registers, &c.* These are all terms from the custom house. A cocket is either a custom house seal, or the sealed warrant that the goods have been customed. A sufferance is the waiving of a claim.

PAGE 110, l. 10. *the mutiny bill*, the Act, always passed for one year and annually renewed, empowering the king to maintain and discipline the Army. It is now embodied in the Army Act (1881).

l. 33. *Sursum corda* : 'lift up your hearts'.

## INDIA

PAGE 111. *Speech on the East India Bill.* Introduced by Fox in November of this year, during the Coalition Ministry. He proposed to vest the Government of India in seven commissioners named in the bill, their successors to be appointed by the Crown. It was thrown out by the Lords, as a violation of the Company's rights.

PAGE 112, l. 17. *Polygars*, subordinate feudal chiefs; a term peculiar to Southern India.

l. 18. *Zemindars*, tenants-in-chief, paying their land rents directly to the Government.

PAGE 113, l. 10. *Gentoos*, a term taken from the Portuguese 'gentio', a gentile, and denoting the Hindus.

PAGE 115, l. 16. *He have arbitrary power!* In answer to Hastings's plea that all rulers in the East are despotic.

PAGE 117. *Speech on the Nabob of Arcot's Debts.* Arcot, the capital of the Carnatic, was taken and held by Clive in 1751, and until 1801, when it was ceded to the Company, was governed nominally by a Nabob under the suzerainty of the Nizam of Hyderabad, but really by the British from Madras. In and after 1765 the Nabob, Mahomet Ali, having designs on the territories of the Rajah of Tanjore and other neighbours, contracted with certain servants of the Company for money and for the aid of the Company's troops without its consent. His aggressions upon Hyder Ali, the Maharajah of Mysore, the western part of the Carnatic, resulted in 1769 in a treaty of peace dictated by Hyder Ali under the walls of Madras. Exasperated by the continued insolence and chicanery of the Nabob and the British adventurers who abetted him, Hyder and his son Tippoo descended on the Carnatic in the manner here described in 1780, but were defeated by Sir Eyre Coote in 1781. In the course of these transactions the Nabob of Arcot contracted debts to his British accomplices which, at a monstrous interest, soon amounted to more than three million

pounds. An inquiry into the history of these debts was begun by the Directors of the Company, when the board of ministers and other officials for the control of India, instituted by Pitt in 1784, suddenly decided to admit them as valid, and assign a fund for their discharge from the revenues of the stricken Carnatic. On February 28, 1785, Fox moved for papers on the subject, and this speech was the last of the debate. The motion was defeated by a large majority.

l. 32. *treble government*, i.e. the servants of the Company in their official capacity, the same or other servants as private adventurers, and the Nabob.

PAGE 121, l. 13. *sowing of dragon's teeth*, an allusion to the legend of Jason, who sowed such teeth in Colchis and slew the warriors who sprang from them.

PAGE 122, footnote. The Jaghire was the territory adjoining Madras. The word means a piece of land and its rents assigned as an annuity.

PAGE 124, l. 8. *silence their tongues*. Horace, *Odes* iii. 1. 2.

PAGE 126, l. 28. *Indole*, &c. Silius Italicus, *Punica* viii. 406 f.: 'Ah, of how fair a nature is he, this youth, and how goodly a gift shall he make for the ages to come to the peoples of Ansonia in their great countryman; whose voice, ringing beyond Ganges and Ind, shall fill all lands, and the lightning of his tongue subdue the frenzy of war.' The allusion is to Servius Tullius, King of Rome.

## THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

PAGE 128, l. 2. *the assembly*, the States-General, converted into the National or Constituent Assembly in June-August 1789. Of 652 members of the Third Estate, 272 were Advocates, 162 Magistrates of different tribunals, and 176 merchants, monied men, and farmers.

PAGE 129, l. 13. *ius retractus*, or *droit de retrait*, by which the lord of a fief was enabled compulsorily to repurchase alienated lands.

PAGE 180, l. 5. *The literary cabal*, the men who wrote the Encyclopaedia, begun in 1751 by Diderot and D'Alembert, completed in thirty-five volumes, and republished in 1782. It was not an encyclopaedia only, but a speculative treatise, especially on politics and religion, carrying on the influence of Voltaire, who ardently encouraged it. J. J. Rousseau was intimate with the Encyclopaedists for a time. Burke met Rousseau during his exile in England, and greatly disliked him. He met Diderot in Paris in 1773.

l. 17. *The paradoxes of eloquent writers*. Burke, in reviewing Rousseau's Letter to D'Alembert in the *Annual Register* in 1760, supposed its paradoxes to be ironical, like his own *Vindication of Natural Society*. He means here the smaller fry of journalists, who repeated the paradoxes.

l. 24. *Cicero . . . describes Cato*: in the Preface to the *Paradoxa*.

l. 29. *pede nudo Catonem*. Horace, *Epistles* i. 19. 12-14, where it is said that you do not acquire Cato's virtue by aping his foibles, e. g. that of going barefooted.

*Mr. Hume*. He befriended Rousseau at the beginning of his exile in England (January 1766-May 1767). Rousseau, however, profoundly believed in the paradoxes of the *Social Contract* (1762), and the statement reported by Hume must have been an unguarded frolic.

PAGE 131, l. 14. *deputation from the clergy*, the clergy of the Second Estate who joined the Third and some of the Nobles in forming the Constituent Assembly. In one sitting, on August 4, 1789, the Assembly abolished the feudal dues and privileges, the privileges of all corporations, and the tithes.

PAGE 132, l. 21. *fraudulent circulation*, assignats or paper notes, with forced currency, were first issued by the Constituent Assembly on the security of the confiscated Church lands, and were followed by ever new issues.

l. 28. *Still as you rise*, &c. Waller, *Panegyric to my Lord Protector*.

PAGE 133, l. 10. The Guises, a ducal family of Lorraine, were the protagonists of the Catholic League in France in the sixteenth century. The first Condé (d. 1569) and Admiral Coligni, who perished in the Massacre of St. Bartholomew, were Huguenot leaders. The power of the great Condé (1621-86) imperilled the Crown, against which he twice rebelled.

*Richelieu* (1585-1642), the Minister of Louis XIII, the founder of the royal absolutism in France and the French ascendancy in Europe.

*October 6, 1789*. On October 5 Versailles was invaded by a mob of starving men and women from Paris, who, after breaking into the Palace, forced the king with his wife and children to ride in their midst to the Capital (October 6). Marie Antoinette, known to be hostile to the Revolution, was exposed to much insult, and narrowly escaped assassination.

l. 27. *sixteen or seventeen years*: in 1773.

PAGE 134, l. 6. *sharp antidote*. Burke states in a previous passage that she carried with her the means of taking her own life.

l. 26. *Dr. Price*. See note to p. 34. His sermon contained the following sentences: 'I could almost say *Lord, lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace. . . . I have lived to see Thirty Millions of People . . . spurning at slavery, Their King led in triumph, and an arbitrary monarch surrendering himself to his subjects.*'

PAGE 135, l. 6. *purified*, &c.: Aristotle, *Poetics* vi. 2.

l. 14. *Siddons*, Sarah (1755-1831), acted at Drury Lane from 1782 to 1789, and resumed her career in 1791. *Garrick* (1717-79) retired in 1776.

l. 16. Burke to Sir Philip Francis, February 20, 1790: 'I tell you that the recollection of the manner in which I saw the Queen of France in the year 1774, and the contrast between that brilliancy, splendour, and beauty, with the prostrate homage of a nation to her—and the abominable scene of 1789, which I was describing, *did* draw tears from me, and wetted my paper. These tears came again into my eyes almost as often as I looked at the description; they may again.'

l. 18. *the state of your judicature.* By a law of the Constituent Assembly the old courts were abolished, and judges were elected for the cantons, or smallest geographical divisions, by a popular suffrage, for the districts and departments by colleges of electors, who were popularly chosen. The office of judge was tenable for six years, and open to all legal practitioners.

l. 24. *ardentis massae fuligine lippes*,—' purblind with the soot of the burning mass', Juvenal x. 130.

PAGE 136, l. 9. *Hale*, Sir Matthew (1609-76), who was counsel for Archbishop Laud. Burke is writing from memory, and has the facts a little wrong. Hale, Chief Justice under Charles II, was made a Judge of Common Pleas by Cromwell in 1654, in spite or even on account of his royalist sympathies, and after two judges who were rancorous towards royalists had been discontinued. Hale only stipulated on his appointment that he should not have to try political prisoners, and Cromwell agreed.

PAGE 137, l. 26. *Pater ipse*, &c. Virgil, *Georgics* i. 121: 'The Father of men has willed that the husbandman's path should not be easy.'

PAGE 139, l. 5. *loves sloth and hates quiet*: from Tacitus *Germania* 15 'mira diversitate naturae, cum iidem homines sic ament inertiam et oderint quietem'.

l. 24. *an assembly . . . two years*, i.e. the Legislative Assembly provided by the Constitution of 1791.

PAGE 144, l. 16. *all the charities of all*, and footnote: *De Officiis*, i. 17. 57.

PAGE 150, l. 22. *Finita potestas*, &c. Lucretius i. 76: 'by what means the power of each part is limited, and its bounds set fast and deep.'

PAGE 151, l. 4. *Montesquieu*, Charles Baron de M. (1689-1755), physicist, satirist, and philosopher. He resided two years in England (1729-31). Burke refers to his *De l'Esprit des Lois* (1748).

PAGE 152, l. 31. *We formerly have had a King of France*, &c. John the Good, taken prisoner at Poitiers in 1356 by Edward the Black Prince. After the battle the Prince served his captive at supper (Froissart, v. 64. 288), and took care to be mounted on a poorer horse when entering London.

PAGE 153, l. 10. *Helvetius*, Claude Adrien (1715-71), one of the Encyclopaedists, and author of *De l'Esprit* (1758), which endeavours to reduce all consciousness to sensation.

PAGE 155. *Letters on a Regicide Peace.* Pitt, forced into the war against his will, waged it in the old fashion for colonial acquisitions, and sought every opportunity to end it. In April 1795 Prussia negotiated a peace at Basel, and Spain soon followed the example. After the appointment of the Directory in the autumn, the King's Speech at the opening of Parliament (October) stated that the Government would be willing to treat, and in the early spring of 1796 overtures were made to Paris, and scornfully rejected. In September 'conversations' were held in Paris between the Directors and Lord Malmesbury, who was sent over, but the French Government, not desiring peace, refused to restore the Austrian Netherlands, and Malmesbury after a short while was abruptly dismissed. These negotiations were distasteful to the king and to the Portland Whigs, who had joined the Cabinet, and were bent on crushing the Revolution; and their opinions were voiced by Burke in four *Letters*, of which the first two were published in the autumn of 1796, the third after the author's death in 1797, and the fourth in Bishop King's edition of the *Works* in 1812. The first two were addressed to 'a Member of the Present Parliament', and the passage quoted is to prove from the excesses of the Jacobinical régime that no moral reformation in revolutionary France was possible.

PAGE 158, l. 6. *Carnot* (1753–1823) voted in the Convention for the death of Louis XVI, organized the armies of the Revolution on the Committee of Public Safety, was a member of the Directory, and afterwards rendered conspicuous services to Napoleon.

l. 8. *down of usurped pomp*, the palace of the Luxembourg, where the Directors lived.

PAGE 159, l. 1. *Trophonian cave.* The rites of the deity Trophonius were celebrated in a cave near Lebadea in Boeotia. Pausanias denies the tradition, here alluded to, that none who entered the cave ever laughed again.

l. 17. The *Reflections* were fictitiously addressed to a young Frenchman.

l. 24. 'great varieties,' &c. Addison, *Cato* v. i :

Eternity ! thou pleasing dreadful Thought !  
Through what Variety of untry'd Being,  
Through what new Scenes and Changes must we pass !

### HIS OWN LIFE

PAGE 160. *A Letter to the Sheriffs of Bristol.* Written to defend his attitude in the American question.

PAGE 161, l. 19. *Saviles*, Sir George Savile (1726–84), prominent as a champion of religious toleration.

*Dowdeswells*, William Dowdeswell (1721–75), Chancellor of the Exchequer 1765–6.

l. 20. *Wentworths*, i. e. Lord Rockingham (1730–82).

*Bentincks*, i. e. the Duke of Portland (1738–1809).

*Lennoxes*, i. e. Charles Lennox, Duke of Richmond. See note to p. 78.

*Manchesters*, George Montagu, fourth Duke (1737–88).

l. 21. *Keppels*, Augustus Keppel, Admiral and first Viscount (1725–86), First Lord of the Admiralty 1782, an intimate friend of Burke's.

*Saunderses*, Admiral Sir Charles Saunders (1713–75). First Lord in 1766.

l. 22. *Cavendish*, Lord John (1732–96), Chancellor of the Exchequer '82 and '83.

PAGE 162, l. 5. *the late horrible spirit*, the anti-Catholic excesses, which culminated in the Lord George Gordon riots in London in June 1780. The general election, when this speech was delivered, was in August.

PAGE 163. *Speech declining the Poll*. Delivered on the hustings at the Guildhall.

PAGE 166, l. 1. *the members of this constitution*, i. e. its popular, aristocratical, and monarchical elements.

PAGE 167, l. 1. *when Priam*, &c. *Iliad* xxiv. 248 f.

l. 8. *Zoilus*, of Amphipolis, a fourth-century rhetorician, who, as a malicious and carping critic of Homer, earned the title of 'Homeromastix' ('Homer's scourge').

PAGE 167. *A Letter to a Noble Lord*, i. e. Francis Russell, fifth Duke of Bedford (1765–1802), who attached himself to the party of Fox, and, with the Earl of Lauderdale, attacked the grant of Burke's pensions in the House of Lords in 1796. He was answered by Lord Grenville.

l. 19. *on these grounds*, his economic reforms.

l. 26. *The first session I sat in parliament*, that which opened in January 1766. Burke was very active in defending the repeal of the Stamp Act and attacking the restrictions on American trade.

l. 32. *my constitution sank*. He was taken with a severe illness in 1766.

PAGE 168, l. 24. *still in its infancy in England*. Several speculators in economics belong to the latter half of the seventeenth century—e. g. Sir William Temple, Sir Roger Coke, and Samuel Fortrey. 'When Adam Smith came to London he found to his amazement that Burke had anticipated conclusions the maturing of which cost Smith himself many years of anxious and unremitting labour,'—Buckle, *History of Civilization*, I. vii.

PAGE 169, l. 18. *Homer nods*. Horace, *Ars Poetica* 359.

l. 23. *the stuff of which his dreams are made*. *The Tempest*, v. i. 156.

l. 25. *grants to the house of Russell*, in the person of John, first Earl of Bedford (1486?–1555), a favourite of Henry VIII.

l. 31. *'lies floating many a rood.'* *Paradise Lost*, i. 196.

PAGE 171, l. 6. *sansculottes* = 'breechless', a name given in

scorn to the republicans of the lower classes in the French Revolution, and accepted with pride.

l. 7. *the Garters, &c.* At the head of the College of Heralds are three Kings-at-Arms—Garter, Principal King-at-Arms, Clarencieux, from the dukedom of Clarence (Clare in Suffolk), with jurisdiction south of the Trent, and Norroy, i. e. *north* and *roy*, with jurisdiction north of the Trent. The two Rouge Dragons are pursuivants of the College.

l. 22. *Murray*, William Murray, Lord Mansfield (1705–93), Lord Chief Justice from 1756.

*Yorke*, Charles (1722–70), Lord Chancellor in 1770.

l. 25. *Guillim*, John (1565–1621), who systematized heraldry in his *Display of Heraldrie* (1610).

*Edmondson*, Joseph (d. 1786), one of the heralds, and author of a *Complete Body of Heraldry*.

*Collins*, Arthur (d. 1760), author of *The Peerage of England*.

l. 29. *alnager*, an officer appointed to supervise the measurement of woollen goods; the office was abolished in the reign of William III. Alnage = measurement by the ell (F. *aune*).

PAGE 172, l. 10. *recent confiscation*. In 1539 he received large grants from the forfeited estates of the Marquis of Exeter. The grants out of the property of the Church (Thorney and Woburn) were made in 1549.

PAGE 175, l. 20. *municipal law*, i. e. divisional, Europe being taken as a political whole, and its nations as provinces. The Nullum Tempus Act of 1768 protected the holders of land against the dormant claims of the Church.

l. 29. *institutes, digest*, summaries of Roman Law compiled under the direction of Justinian, 527–34.

l. 30. *novels*, i. e. *novellae*, new decrees supplementary to the Codex and incorporated in it 534–65.

PAGE 176, l. 22. *frankpledge*, the system by which every member of a tithe was made responsible for every other.

l. 32. *Dum domus, &c.* *Aeneid* ix. 447: 'while the house of Aeneas shall dwell by the immovable rock of the Capitol, and a Roman father shall be lord of the world.'

Footnote. ~~tempum in modum arcis.~~ Tacitus, *Histories* v. 12.



